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| ERIC Document Resume                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                          | See Instruction Sheet                       |                             | DATE OF RESUME                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  | DATE RECEIVED                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
| <b>A. PUBLICATION DATA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| 1. ERIC NUMBER<br><b>ED001435</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                          | 2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).<br><b>N.A.</b> |                             | 3. IDENTIFICATION NO.<br><b>N.A.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW                                                                                                                                                    |  |
| 4. AUTHOR(S):<br><b>N.A.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE<br>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                |  |
| 5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED:<br><b>Urban Education and Cultural Deprivation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | COPYRIGHT GRANTED<br>YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                       |  |
| 6. PUBLICATION TITLE:<br><b>N.A.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED<br>YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                                            |  |
| 7. EDITOR(S):<br><b>Hunnicut, C.W.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                          |                                             |                             | 8. PLACE OF ORIGIN<br>ORG. <b>University Div. of Summer Sessions, Sch. of Education</b><br>ST. <b>Syracuse University</b><br>CITY <b>Syracuse</b> STATE <b>New York</b><br>TELE <b>Syracuse, New York</b><br>INST/LOC CODE |  | TYPE OF REPORT<br>PROPOSAL <input type="checkbox"/><br>IN-PROGRESS <input type="checkbox"/><br>FINAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br>FOLLOW-UP <input type="checkbox"/> |  |
| 9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE<br><b>School of Education<br/>Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 10. VOL.<br><b>N.A.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 11. PAGES<br><b>N.A.</b> | 12. MO./YR.<br><b>1964</b>                  | 13. TOTAL PP.<br><b>132</b> | ERIC SATELLITE CODE                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| <b>B. INDEXING DATA</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
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| <p>Various scientific disciplines were represented. Aspects of programs for the culturally deprived were discussed in the areas of 1) support, 2) home and neighbors, 3) the student, and 4) the school.</p> <p>Problems in financing programs are caused by unequal tax bases in the cities, the apparent unconcern of the state for the cities, and the unfeasibility of the federal government becoming involved with every major city in the nation in order to equalize opportunities.</p> <p>A culturally disadvantaged child has little chance for constructive decision in the home. The school should therefore allow students to take responsibility. Parents of disadvantaged children must be treated with respect as human beings. They must be given responsibility and a clear view of benefits to be gained by their efforts. Slums require an ideology around which they can organize and fight.</p> <p>The culturally deprived child is a complex being and should be treated as such. Programs should be carefully implemented. Deprivation cannot be eliminated without eliminating discrimination. Eliminating the neighborhood school is the first step in eliminating discrimination.</p> <p>Teachers have used educational games, role playing, and the use of "hip" language in teaching culturally disadvantaged youths. Techniques which emphasize the sensory and language arts are helpful. Educational organization must be a process of constant change, flexible in adapting to the ever changing needs of people. Although the organization changes, the school must maintain consistency, competence, and purpose.</p> |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
| <b>ERIC No.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                          |                                             |                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                |  |
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ED001435

SEAS  
MAY 31 1965

# URBAN EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DEPRIVATION

C. W. HUNNICUTT, *Editor*

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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1964

*Published by*

UNIVERSITY DIVISION OF SUMMER SESSIONS  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY



Library of Congress Catalog Number: 64-8829

Copyright © 1961 by School of Education

Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York

Price \$1.50

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For additional copies write to

Syracuse University Press  
Box 87, University Station,  
Syracuse, New York 13210

Manufactured in the United States of America  
by the Printing Division, Syracuse University Press

## *Foreword*

The problem of Urban Education and Cultural Deprivation is of the greatest contemporary significance both inside and outside of our national boundaries.

Internationally, success in the ideological struggle with Communism will be largely determined by the degree of our success in working with the uncommitted people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. They hold the balance of power. Practically all of them are non-white. Our greatest barrier to communication with these uncommitted countries has long been the economic and social inequality of non-whites in America. Every failure to accord equality, every example of discrimination is publicized abroad where it will hurt us most, presumably proving that our vaunted American rights and freedoms are only for whites; that non-whites can hold but a second-class citizenship in the United States. Until racial and cultural equality of opportunity are substantially universal throughout America we shall remain vulnerable.

In reality, of course, all of the foregoing is extraneous. Justification for all-out efforts to achieve universal equality of opportunity, in no way need depend upon international fear or hope. Rather, the pursuit of such equality is at the very heart of our American ideology. It is the dream that has attracted unnumbered multitudes to our shores. It is the foundation of human dignity, the essence of our legal and political structure.

Opportunity in American has usually rested upon *economic* opportunity. An adequate income may not be sufficient, but it is essential to the achievement of desired privileges, as well as to the maintenance of physical needs. Our new laws against discrimination, vitally important though they are, are only one step toward the house, the restaurant, the resort, or the college that a citizen may desire. Only when he has an adequate financial base can he make any progress toward equality of opportunity. For example, only when he can pay a higher rental can he hope to leave the slums.

Increasingly, economic opportunity depends upon schooling. Rare indeed is the person today who can expect to rise to economic dignity without an adequate education. Already, most work requiring a competence less than that implied by a high school diploma can be done better and more cheaply by machines — and the skill-level of machines is rising. Out-of-school youth will soon constitute a majority of the unemployed, and without added education the likelihood of their

gaining permanent employment looks very dim. The all-too-typical impact of automation and reduced employment is not so much to cause the dismissal of current employees, as simply not to replace them when they move or retire. For many years, there has been little, if any, net growth in employment in transportation, or in manufacturing, despite a large growth in productivity and in population. Most increase in employment has been outside the profit system: in government, education, foundations, etc. The possible result when sufficient numbers of young people discover that they may be permanently unemployable is grim to contemplate.

All of these problems are accentuated in cities. People displaced by farm machines and those who cannot be employed in villages or small towns migrate to cities. Those unneeded or unwanted in the South move northward or westward. The problems are difficult enough for impoverished whites; they become almost insurmountable for non-whites, who may encounter the added barrier of racial job discrimination.

A further complication has been the emigration toward the suburbs. Hordes of families having sufficient income, typically white, have taken their children out of the city schools. In some city systems and in a great many neighborhood schools, non-whites now predominate, and the trend is growing. In all-too-many cases, those left behind have been products of generations of inadequate schooling. Poorly educated parents and inadequate school programs have ill-prepared the next generation to do any better. Customs, mores, and attitudes fostered in many cities and neighborhoods have been at variance with those of the dominant groups possessing greater status and education. The vicious cycle of separatism has continued generation after generation. Now, almost suddenly, the cycle is being broken. Valiant efforts are being made to change. A generation is being encouraged to lift itself by the bootstraps and to rise above several generations of neglect. The magic of education is that it can make feasible such an apparently impossible task. Since a given child starts from scratch, if he can have the right education, he and many of his generation can jump across the gap. Despite difficulties giant strides are being made.

These strides are the product of cooperation among many and diverse people and varied organizations. Both foundations and tax sources are lending support. Students of many disciplines and of more than one race are hard at work. Only by such a broad and coordinated attack can success be achieved.

Our speakers at this Conference draw upon many backgrounds: education (both collegiate and public school) sociology, anthropology, social psychology, psychiatry, the other behavioral sciences, and philanthropy. Each was chosen because he has something important to

say, and because he is skilled in communicating effectively with interested people *outside* his own area of specialization. In a sense, during these days we shall be listening to an interdisciplinary conversation. We shall thus learn some of the giant strides that are being made and shall discover some directions for still greater progress. Out of this we may see more clearly what each one of us may be able to do.

Syracuse, New York  
1964

C. W. HUNNICUTT

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PART I/FINANCING CHANGE



new ideas produced out of the heads of single individuals; that what one finds are new insights, new ways of putting things together, new perspectives, and a cleaning of the spectacles through which we look at old things. Maybe so. But whatever they are, these people on the balance of your program are the producers. They are not only producers, but, having heard some of their pitches, I can testify that they are good salesmen as well.

What I shall say today might be paraphrased, who's listening? What happens after the thoughts have been articulated? What happens after experiments have been conducted and demonstrations demonstrated? What happens with the study report that you have sworn will never gather dust?

Exciting ideas are being developed. Many communities, aided by universities, foundations, and government are seriously planning to deprive the culturally deprived of their deprivation. Can it be done? To get it done, what conditions must be present? Who must get in the act? What are the obstacles?

### ***The Iceberg Tip***

We must be clear at the outset that the title of this conference, *Urban Education and Cultural Deprivation*, big as it is, is just the tip of the iceberg. A truer designation would be "social and economic deprivation." This realization plunges the whole matter into the larger context of the organization of society: who's on top, who's down below, how can those below move upward, do they want to anyway, do you want them to (because how much room is there up around the top or even in the middle?), and what are all those people going to do when a machine can perform better, cheaper, and faster?

If the problem is that vast and pervasive, where can you take hold? It's pretty discouraging. The implication is that you are not really going to improve the education of the culturally deprived in big cities until you have created social and economic *opportunities* and made them visible, desirable, and equally available to all (for this is the core of that mysterious thing called "motivation"), and that you have made it possible for all to acquire the skills necessary to function socially and economically. But this seems really to be suggesting some kind of statism or socialism; and we're not going to go for that in this country!

In any case, the subject under discussion is vast and goes far beyond such questions as how to teach reading better, how to organize the slum school (ungraded primary? 4-4-4? tracks or no tracks? community school?), how to prepare youngsters for work roles, or how to train

teachers for the deprived. These are all essential elements, but they are only part of the picture.

One could also split hairs about the meaning of cultural deprivation. It can quite truthfully be said that many people of means lack culture. You don't have to be poor to be culturally deprived, which is why some people prefer the phrase "socially and economically deprived." There is no doubt, however, that this conference is talking about poor people who more often than not are ethnic minorities, and more often than not, Negroes.

Another group of hair splitters or image protectors likes to say "culturally different" when they mean "deprived." I think it is positively negative to indulge in such practice, however noble the motive. It obfuscates the basic problem: deprivation of one kind or another. Glossing this over makes it harder to find our way over a road already impossibly devious. The goal is to abolish deprivation, not differences — deprivation of money, of opportunity, of social status, of free choice, of civil rights, of skill, of hope, of a future. As an aside, I am struck by the fact that thirty years ago such an enumeration would inevitably have included "security." It is an interesting commentary on our changing times and thought that while you could add many things to the above enumeration, security, in the sense of the 1930's, would probably not be one of them.

One last point about the term deprivation is that relatively may have as much to do with adverse effects as does absolute deprivation. When the little you have stands in sharp and visible contrast to the much that others have, a sense of injustice, of unfairness, of inequality may give rise to consequences more painful to society than if all were in the same condition, however low.

### ***Not By Schools Alone***

It is evident that cultural deprivation and its effects will not be cured in the classroom alone or even in the educational system alone.

If the classes in which the schooling of certain culturally deprived young people takes place are all Negro, their education will suffer. This is not a problem the school alone can solve.

If job opportunities appear to be unavailable to boys in a high school in a low income area, their motivation to stay in school and succeed will be depressed. The school alone cannot change this.

If the student's home is in a slum, the complex pressures to fail in school, to drop out, to engage in random violence, to get hooked on dope, or to subside into nothingness are powerful and in large measure, although not totally, beyond the reach of the school.

## *Can It Be Done?*

DAVID R. HUNTER

Executive Director, Stern Family Fund

a native of Evanston, Illinois, studied at the University of Colorado, the University of California, and the University of Chicago. He has held research or administrative positions with the American Public Welfare Association, the Public Welfare Department of Dallas, Texas, the Office of Price Administration, UNRRA in the Middle East and Italy, the United States Military Government in Germany, and with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) dealing with various Latin American Nations. From 1959-1963 he played a significant role in the Ford Foundation's program dealing with urban affairs and youth development. He is now Executive Director of the Stern Family Fund.

Most people who make speeches and present papers at two-day conferences deliver themselves of recommendations and guidelines for action by some *other* fellow. Very often their recommendations are uncontaminated by personal practical application, and though they may make nice leisure reading are not good road maps.

Fortunately for you, following this first address, you will be vigorously attacked, recommended at, guided, and shook up by a string of people who not only think, but are very much in the *act*. As a matter of fact, I found to my horror that I had made a serious tactical error in accepting the invitation to appear here without knowing who else was to speak.

I make my way as an orator by quoting with approbation or condemnation all the expressive experts I can find on whatever is the subject at hand. My panic was unbounded when I discovered that all the people I quote with approbation are right here at this meeting, thus depriving me of the secret sources of my wisdom. Have you ever been faced with the necessity of saying something that you thought up yourself? This is like asking if you have ever found yourself standing naked and alone at center stage in Radio City Music Hall. You might ease my embarrassment by pointing out that there are really very few



Obviously, to change all this, the life circumstances of the culturally deprived must be entered at many points by many different institutions and systems, public and private.

Equally obviously we need something *more* than ideas and concepts about what to do in education, in housing policy, in the employment services, in social welfare, in legal services, and the like. To be sure, without the new ideas, approaches, and techniques that you will be considering during these two days, nothing constructive and more effective can be done by anybody. But my question is: what does it take to move the institutions and systems of a city into the right kind of action? It's one thing for professor so and so to have a terrific idea for a new approach to the teaching of reading in low income schools. It's another to get the idea adopted, financed and properly executed by the school.

It is one thing to advocate that education through junior college and even four years of college should be free to all just like high school. It's another to legislate this and finance it.

It's one thing to see the rationality of and seriously to advocate the establishment of a guaranteed minimum income in the United States; another to effectuate the policy.

### *A Few of the Obstacles*

The difficulties of getting perfectly splendid policies adopted stem not only from the fact that not everybody else understands things as well as we do, nor only from the fact that institutions tend to get into ruts and to continue performing in accustomed ways even though the accustomed ways are irrelevant to current needs. These are obstacles enough, and they are accompanied by the discomfulating one of the sheer complexity of human society.

Beyond these are further obstacles which make one unsure that the job needing to be done can be done in time in a political democracy having a free market. There are conflicting interests which must be accommodated. Sometimes the conflict is very real. Sometimes it is mistakenly assessed as a conflict by those in whom a particular interest is vested. For instance, an employer in a low-wage industry would generally regard it as against his interests to raise wages. I would regard it as in his interest to raise wages. I would regard it as in his interest to do so and to persuade his peers to do likewise, because raising low wages spreads purchasing power, keeps the economy lubricated, and reduces deprivation, cultural or otherwise.

For another instance, I think, along with Dr. Conant, that, for some period of time ahead, we should reverse the present practice and spend twice as much on slum schools as on suburban schools. I would

maintain that it is in the direct interest of the suburban dweller to pay more taxes to improve slum education (and conditions generally) because the consequences of slum life are costing him inordinately now. These costs are occasioned by the low economic productivity of the people, welfare cases, unemployment compensation, sick people who can't afford medical care, crime and delinquency, low purchasing power. Beyond this, the social and political stability of his society is threatened, but people aren't supposed to make such inflammatory statements at sedate conferences.

For still another instance, a white skilled worker in one of the traditional crafts has interests very much at conflict with the upward progress of Negroes. I should qualify this by adding that he has this conflict only in an economy with a labor surplus. No conflict would exist were it public policy, as it should be, that no person would be without work, and that this would be accomplished by strategic subsidization of the private sector and by direct public work. But, in the absence of such public policy, skilled and semi-skilled white workers are very much threatened. We kid ourselves if we say otherwise. They are threatened first by advancing mechanization. And they are most certainly threatened when the skills and capacities of the culturally deprived are raised. Nobody really likes competition in this competitive system of ours, not even the workers.

For a final instance, money. Cities are still in the main financed by property taxes. Property taxes, in addition to being not the best indicator of ability to pay, do not yield enough revenue to run a city. However, since cities are creatures of the state and exist by permission of the state, the state should help finance the city. But states do not like cities, particularly inner cities, where the problems of cultural deprivation largely lie. Perhaps, under recent court decisions, the imbalance of representation between rural and urban areas will be somewhat redressed. But, even so, this will probably be redressed to benefit suburban areas in the metropolitan complex, rather than the core city. So there will still be little representation for the interests of the core city, where are the poor and their expensive ministering institutions. This leaves the federal government as the last source of aid. The federal government is coming to the aid of the city. But in relation to the magnitude and urgency of the problems, this aid is piddling. And even this little has a rough go getting by public policy decision makers and influencers. The federal tax structure is more closely related to the principle of ability to pay than are either state or local systems. People who have the ability to pay in America are influential in the shaping of public policy, and naturally they are not eager that their ability to pay be excessively exploited. The recent

tax cut is an example. Since, over the years, the federal tax system had gotten a little out of whack, certain reforms which would have led to greater equity and spread of purchasing power were proposed along with the tax cut, which was designed primarily to stimulate business activity. Not many reforms got through.

So it's hard to get federal government support on the scale required to make a difference. By making a difference I mean providing opportunities for work, and providing nourishing institutions for people who in every aspect of their lives are undernourished, so that they may have at least a chance to get out from under that invidious and insidious label: the culturally deprived.

I wish I could suggest a formula for achieving enlightened public policy that you have not thought of before. I can't, and don't know whether anyone can.

### ***Mobilizing Self-Interests***

I find myself trying to identify ways in which various self-interests of the city (not necessarily enlightened) can form coalitions developing sufficient consensus for a long enough time to enable the institutions and systems of the city to adopt at least some of the policies and practices your speakers will be recommending. Does this seem too low a level of aspiration? Too pragmatic? Too political and opportunistic? Perhaps. But it stems from a feeling that to expect sweeping structural changes in our society or the adoption of broad policies to effectuate a more equitable and economically viable distribution of income and privileges is unrealistic, at least in my time. I think we are more likely to get a few steps of progress here and a few there. There should be periods of faster movement on a larger scale. The war on poverty may represent the inception of such a period. Title II of the proposed Economic Opportunity Act will certainly give added stimulus to broad community programs which have as a major target the abolition of cultural deprivation.

This presents people in many cities with an opportunity and a challenge. The challenge is to learn ways in which an urban school system in its own internal workings can better educate children who come from poor homes — poor in income, poor in stability, poor in love, poor in developed intelligence, poor in range of interests, poor in expectations, and poor in hope. The challenge is further to mesh the workings of the institutional systems of the city so that the services and the influences that are supposed to be delivered to the culturally deprived actually get there and get there in concord. The challenge is further to remember that the delivery of services effectively and adequately is far from the whole story. Another central part of the

story is that the culturally deprived are also the isolated and alienated. You can't make them clean, bright, hard-working, abstemious, productive, law-abiding, independent, and forward looking by doing things *at* them. They have to be with it if change is to be effected in adults or children or milieu. This means that institutions that are not used to sharing decision making and are not used to being told what is wrong with them by the people they serve must change their ways and actively invite both.

The challenge is then further to put together the strongest kind of coalition possible to provide energy, leadership, and cover for planning and carrying out a many faceted program in schools, in neighborhoods, in private enterprise, in welfare agencies, in city planning and development, and in the political system to touch the well-springs of human development and release energies that now are so wretchedly wasted and destroyed.

In any effort of this kind there is certainly a substantial reservoir of altruism. This will provide a certain amount of motive power for a community effort. But it may be safer in the long run to rely on the glue of self-interest to keep the coalition together and moving. The mayor is interested because he cannot allow his city to rot, to lose revenue, to have increasing rates of delinquency; and furthermore an increasing proportion of the votes within the city proper are those of the culturally deprived. Programs for them make sense.

Business leadership is interested because the culturally deprived are not good customers nor are they good workers. In most enterprises, the need for cheap unskilled labor is rapidly disappearing. Now the need is for skilled workers. It is not uncommon in a city to have an almost equal number of skilled job openings and of unskilled unemployed. Moreover, when a city today develops a comprehensive plan to attack juvenile delinquency, or nurture mental health, or defeat poverty, or go after the culturally deprived, a lot of outside assistance can be obtained from foundations, federal agencies, and state agencies. That's good business.

Trade union leadership is interested because trade union leadership is *supposed* to be interested in community affairs. There is also the question of image. Trade unions are too frequently perceived as blocking access to equal opportunity, protecting the interests of those who are already in, forgetting the poor and those who are out. This must be corrected.

The Board of Education is interested because the slum schools may fall down in a chaotic heap if something is not done. All too often, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools are expected single handedly to prevent delinquency, stop drop outs, train skilled



eyes to some of the problems, and lent a cooperating hand.

The welfare agencies are interested because they are disturbed by an awareness that they have not produced some of the results they promised when they solicited community funds. It is getting harder for united community fund drives to raise their quotas; there is an unease and even a disaffection abroad about the efficacy of some welfare services as presently conceived and organized.

The culturally deprived are interested because they do not want to be deprived any more.

Certainly these are some elements of the coalition that might be woven to produce valid social progress in a community. This much, most assuredly can be done, and conferences of this kind will help in this direction. This conference will further inspire local effort, and there has been a lot already. It will help to establish priorities and strategies. It will introduce some ideas that everyone may not have heard before. It is a good thing for a community and a university to do.

### *The Long Pull*

Whether or not the interest in this community or in any community will be sufficiently profound and sustained to do things in a big enough way for a long enough time is a question only time can answer. At the local level there is a natural tendency for the community to get all steamed up about a "project" and take off on it at full speed, only to find that next year its attention has wandered off to something else, or it has gotten a little bored and the spark has gone. Also there is a tendency to compromise and water down program plans before they even get off the ground. It has been interesting in recent weeks to observe the reaction of New Yorkers to the violence occurring in the streets and subways. A number of letters to the editor have expounded the theme: look at all the things we've been doing about juvenile delinquency and still it happens! Nothing we have tried works! Send 'em all to camp! The truth of the matter is that New York City has "done" very little of a basic nature about delinquency, and it is not the least bit surprising that what is happening is happening. Newspaper stories about program plans have given the community the impression that much is being done, when in fact that is not the case.

About this subject of the culturally deprived the caution should certainly be observed, to "make no little plans." Little plans and pilot projects are likely to be illusory and lead to disaffection and cynicism.

Beyond the local community, lies the nation. Can the necessary coalitions be constructed at the national level to effect policies and

inference? No one can answer this question yet, but that of course is no reason to slacken one's efforts. I may have over-emphasized the necessity for catering to the self-interests of various groups in the community in order to get movement. Certainly sometimes altruism and goodness and breadth of vision are strong motivating forces in the establishment of public policies which tend toward justice and equality, and one must hope that they will take sway over parochial interest. But the evidence of a couple of thousand years does not yet allow much confidence that this will be so.

This leaves no alternative but for scholars, for those who minister to society professionally, and for community leaders to identify various group self-interests and show how free choice for all and the capacity to make free choices rationally are in the interests of all groups, high and low. Opportunities equally accessible to all are in the interest of all groups. Investments, big investments, in the institutions that prepare people to avail themselves of opportunities are in the interests of all groups, even those that now occupy the positions of power and possession. Policies that lead to equity in the distribution of opportunities and income are in the interests of those groups that now have more. Within such a framework the inventions and innovations that may be suggested for overcoming the handicaps of the culturally deprived will have a chance of moving from the hot-house into the main-stream.

PART II/THE HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD

## *The Hidden Curriculum of the Middle Class Home*

FRED L. STRODTBECK

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One alarming social problem in America today concerns those families who, despite our present efforts to help them, are still unable to rear their children in a way that will make them self-sufficient as adults. Time magazine expresses it this way:

The tragedy of Harlem is that yet another generation of such men is being bred because they cannot break out of the vicious cycle of the ghetto: poor schooling, leading to a low-paying job or no job at all, leading to housing in a rundown neighborhood, leading anew to poor schooling for the children.<sup>1</sup>

A generation ago, the comparable popular explanation would have started the cycle with reference to poverty: today it is started with a reference to poor schooling. It is no longer believed that the central problem is poverty because, in its grosser economic aspects, poverty alone could be remedied. Morgan<sup>2</sup> has pointed out that for about 10 billion

<sup>1</sup>Time, July 31, 1964, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Morgan, James M., et. al. *Income and Welfare in the United States*. New York, 1962, pp. 3-4.



dollars a year, the income of every family in the nation now below the subsistence level could be raised to it. Morgan views the problem of poverty as having become the dilemma of giving aid without creating continuing dependency upon governmental support.

At this moment, perhaps for the first time in the history of our nation, one can look objectively at the economic cost of maintaining the poor and know that we can afford this expenditure — if there is no long-range alternative. Most would be willing, however, to spend even more than that amount in efforts to discover an alternative which would reduce the magnitude of the long-range problem. As the Time quotation indicates, in Harlem and elsewhere in the Great Cities, it is to education that America is turning for a solution.

In such matters, one must find for himself the balance of optimism or pessimism which is best matched to his own involvement, but judging from past efforts, the chances of failure are great. Our most recent, well-intentioned and single-minded effort to solve such problems has involved housing. As a prelude to the discussion of education, let me comment upon a recent study of the effects of public housing.

I draw upon "before" and "after" studies of a carefully-chosen sample of 600 persons who were moved from crowded tenements to public housing. The investigators, Wilner and others, regretfully conclude in their 1962 report that:

In general . . . it is not clear . . . that the change from bad to good housing has brought—distinguishable alteration in relations among persons within the family.<sup>3</sup>

There was no greater freedom from illness, no difference in the rate of pregnancies, no improvement in the children's mean arithmetic and reading test scores. There was no change in concern for the larger community, no improvement in self-concept, and very little heightening of aspiration for the husband's job or the children's education. This study does report that the re-housed group like the space they occupied better and their neighbors more — findings which, though positive, certainly fall below the community's expectations for what might be accomplished by improving housing at great public expense.

The mushrooming Aid to Dependent Children Program (hereafter called ADC) is assumed to function like improved housing — it is supposed to provide partial rehabilitation by meeting short-run needs, so that the families involved can later resume responsibility for their own welfare. Burgess and Price<sup>4</sup>, in a study of a national sample of

5,398 ADC cases closed in the first three months of 1961, reach very pessimistic conclusions as to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation. At the time their cases were closed, 68 per cent of all families in the sample earned less than 60 dollars per month. Forty-seven per cent of ADC children were either educationally retarded or out of school between the ages of 14 and 17. By 18 years of age, only 25 percent had completed high school. Long-term evidence for failure of rehabilitation was provided by the large number of cases in which relief was a family tradition. Forty per cent of the recipients had grown up in homes which had received public assistance. Here again, one can only conclude that the combined efforts of public relief and the schools fall below reasonable expectations.

It is my fear that despite the limited success of housing and public assistance programs, there is still a disposition to see the problems of the dependent poor as if they were self-evident. Given the multiple handicaps of being fatherless, poor, and Negro, it scarcely seems necessary to call in a social scientist to see precisely why dependency results. Yet direct attacks on housing and supplementation of low income have not improved the situation. The schools have admittedly done poorly with the population in question, so why is it believed that they will be able to launch a more fundamental attack upon their problem? The current answer is that the schools are expected to modify their traditional methods. But is it self-evident that we know what modifications to make?

If one reasons that the curriculum of the school supplements the curriculum of the home, then the compensatory preparation of students from culturally deprived families may require an analysis of what is learned in the middle class home.

### *The Zacharias Reports*<sup>5</sup>

To illustrate that, despite the considerable sophistication of current approaches, they still overlook the "hidden curriculum" I have in mind, I shall comment upon the recommendations for education of the deprived and segregated made by the Zacharias Committee. The population the Committee had in mind is the "difficult thirty per cent," a population larger than the children of the dependent poor but inclusive of them. Among the suggestions of the Committee were the following. (Note how sharply they are focused upon amelioration of the language deficit):

1. Special programs are needed for helping deprived children learn to read. One approach may be to concentrate first on spoken English.

<sup>3</sup>Wilner, Daniel M. *The Housing Environment and Family Life*. Baltimore, 1962, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>Burgess, M. Elaine, & Price, Daniel O. *An American Dependency Challenge*. Chicago, 1963.

<sup>5</sup>Panel on Educational Research and Development of the President's Science Advisory Committee. *Innovation and Experiment in Education*. Washington.

encouraging children to talk in school rather than constantly admonishing them to listen, and then encourage them in reading when they take it up. (Panel on Educational Research, 1963)

One might guess that the Committee wishes to encourage spoken-aural techniques for transforming direct, perhaps non-syntactic and dialectical speech into standard English before taking up the problem of a written language.

The Committee suggests that unreal situations be avoided, presumably in order to make the conditions of performance less discriminatory against lower class children. This is elaborated as follows:

2. The culturally-deprived child may become frustrated when he reads about middle-class privileges (such as a boy's having his own room in the house). The answer may be to let the child develop his own story materials, thus giving children the freedom to shape the manner of their learning. (p. 32)

In repeating these recommendations, I do not mean to infer that they are all especially good. Concerning this one, I must say that having been frustrated when I read the *Just-so Stories* (for not only did I not own a mongoose; I had never seen one). I am ill prepared to think about life protected from knowledge of such relative deprivations. Carried to an extreme, being restricted to current reality could in itself be very unreal.

3. The deprived child should be taught arithmetic and science in intuitive, non-bookish ways. (p. 32)

The Committee wishes science and arithmetic to be taught in ways that will increase readiness to read, rather than making these subjects dependent upon reading skill.

4. Curriculum units can be designed which are self-contained and self-demonstrative; that is, units should be structured in a way which enables deprived children to discover things for themselves. (p. 32)

This suggestion possibly grows out of the conviction that if children get a chance to build the highest possible tower out of plasticene, they can see the results of their efforts immediately. The teacher can then present the theory of Calder's "stables" or some other exciting engineering perspectives. The Committee believes that such approaches will keep student interests high primarily because of the intrinsic stimulation of the materials and secondarily by avoidance of the ill effects of passive listening. Both curricular objectives may well increase the school adjustment of the deprived child without affecting his position relative to non-deprived children, for, if these work as most such reforms do, they will elicit even better response from the middle class child.

5. The teacher should aim at developing self-strutiny, honesty, and careful observation through social studies. What the child needs is a growing knowledge of who he is and what kind of a world he is living in; much effort in this area is now destroyed by irrelevance, hypocrisy, and misplaced emphasis. (p. 33)

The Zacharias Committee apparently assumed that they would need to work almost entirely with persons who were not professional educators, in order to gain support for this simple, uncamouflaged indictment of current social studies curriculum. The Committee may well have identified an area in which the schools have needlessly lagged behind what the community would accept, but without greater specification, their brief statement is not too helpful.

6. Deprived children should be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial skills and industry, such as those related to commerce. It is not enough just to understand the world in which they live; they should also be taught the need for inventiveness in developing new enterprises. (p. 33)

This suggestion, I view as a kind of Bank Street Ben Franklinism. The economic part of the message does not seem sensitive to the contribution to Negro adjustment which civil service or similar bureaucratic employment contributes.

The Committee apparently believes that deprived children need more unconditional demonstrations of affection from the teacher, perhaps to compensate for a harsh home life. However, if the suggestion that the teacher relate to deprived children warmly is interpreted to encourage relating as a parental surrogate, this may be inappropriate preparation for later non-familial roles. More generally, throughout the Zacharias report there is little emphasis upon personality theory, the facilitation of learning through identification, or the social psychology relevant to development.

The Committee, perhaps wisely, gives more emphasis to the feasibility of institutional innovations such as keeping the school open on what amounts to a settlement house schedule, schools — not custodial nurseries — for the 3 to 6 year old children of the culturally deprived, expanding facilities into buildings not designed as schools, and zoning schools with sufficient flexibility so that changes in residence will not inevitably result in changes in enrollment. They further suggest using enthusiastic amateurs in voluntary programs, promoting according to need in a non-graded elementary school, and teaching in teams to increase specialization of teachers. The schools should have music and art centers, the teachers more resource and conference rooms, and the students a \$10 yearly book allowance to be used for paperbacks on whatever subject the student may be engaged. The Committee suggests that pre-service teacher training internships of six months could be



alternated with six-month study periods which, on occasion, could be used for special preparation related to curricular innovations.

The Committee is convinced that a school system is the "natural unit" for reform. Hence sub-systems comprising about 20,000 pupils and 30 principals would be the model size unit within a big city. The audacity of this suggestion which might lead to a great university taking over such a segment probably justifies the existence of the Committee. We will all be interested to see how well this one works out.

The Committee takes a somewhat radical but currently popular position on testing. The Committee is convinced that "whatever the shortcomings of tests as a means of grouping children in the more fortunate segments of the population, they are slight as compared with the tests for grouping the deprived and the segregated." (p. 37) The Committee here alludes to their belief that abilities and achievement are more complex and subtle than any qualities the tests have been able to measure. There is very little research, they believe, on the nature of complex educational attainments, on acquisition of political ideals, style in writing, mechanical comprehension, etc. Given this state of affairs, the use of tests for guidance, college entrance, and job selection may unduly (perhaps "unfairly") fix the classification of a student. As a remedy, the Committee suggest that testing be made a matter of "local option," not an item to be required by the Superintendent. At the same time, they believe it would be good to devise tests which distinguish quickly between mental retardation and what for slum children can be regarded as pseudo-retardation.

This treatment of testing is to my mind an intellectually inferior answer to the question, "Are Intelligence Tests Unfair to Culturally Deprived Children?"<sup>6</sup> Let us hope that America can be taught that such tests measure "achieved functional capacity," just as it has earlier been led to believe that it measures *innate* potentiality. From my point of view, the lower class child's failure to develop test-taking skills, responsiveness to speed requirements, and familiarity with the specific vocabulary required, cannot be discounted as a matter of error in testing. These lacks are realities which affect the child's classroom performance as well as his test score. The Committee, and all persons fundamentally concerned with the education of the culturally deprived, face a dilemma which grows from this reality. Should the school environment be engineered so as to filter away the importance of verbal intelligence, or should the school environment be modified so as to cultivate verbal intelligence more effectively?

In fairness to the Committee, they have probably reasoned that deprived persons can, with proper instruction, learn reading skills later, and have concluded that it is a shame to impede the growth of mechanical and related competence by relying so heavily upon reading as a tool in the lower grades.

Even so interpreted, it still seems to me that the Committee may inadvertently aggravate the problem it seeks to correct. They do not have any explicit premises about the different types of language or the social organizational context which facilitates the development of particular verbal skills. In their emphasis upon the cognitive aspects of learning, they place little importance upon the role of verbal skills in maintaining interpersonal relations and motivation.

Verbal skills are not only of importance in the complex functioning of relatively established groups, they are also important in increasing one's vulnerability to involvement in group activities and, through this, to the shaping of motivation which group activity contributes. I believe that there are general linkages between organizational structures and verbal skill and that the understanding of such linkages, if they exist, is essential to the theory of compensatory education. More particularly, it is my guess that the conditions which facilitate the development of verbal ability in children relate much less to curricular stimulus material than to power differentials and organizational considerations.

### *The Concept of Public and Formal Language*

We are most particularly indebted to Basil Bernstein, who in his analysis of the difference between working class and middle class speech in England, elaborated the difference between so-called "public" and "formal" language. In our country, the gradients of usage may not be so sharply defined. For this reason, Bernstein's formulation is to be viewed as a provocative hypothesis for the lower classes as a whole but probably much more descriptive of the difference between the language of the dependent poor and the middle classes. This public language is characterized by short, grammatically simple, sentences which have poor syntax and often unfinished. There is a repetitive use of conjunctions (then, and, because), and the verb is in the active mood. There are many short commands and questions, a rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs, and an avoidance of impersonal pronouns (such as "one" and "it") as subjects of sentences.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Bernstein, Basil, "Some Sociological Determinants of Perception," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 9, 1958, 159-74.

<sup>7</sup>"A Public Language: Some Sociological Implications of a Linguistic Form," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 10, 1959, 311-26.

<sup>8</sup>"Language and Social Class," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 11, 1960, 271-6.

<sup>9</sup>Henry, Jules "Spontaneity, Initiative, and Creativity in Suburban Classrooms," In George D. Spindler (ed.) *Education and Culture*, New York, 1963, 215-33.

In public language, Bernstein suggests, idiomatic phrases operate on a low level of casual generality in which descriptive, visual, and tactile symbols are frequently employed more to carry emotive impact than to develop meaning logically.

In contrast, a formal language has accurate grammatical order and syntax. Logical modifications and stress are mediated through a grammatically complex sentence structure, especially through use of a range of conjunctions and relative clauses. Impersonal pronouns are frequently used as subjects of sentences. Logical relationships and temporal and spatial contiguity are carefully indicated by the frequent use of the appropriate prepositions. A wide range of adjectives and adverbs is used, and sequences of sentences are organized so that there are qualifications *between*, as well as *within* them.

The difference between saying "Shut up," to a child in contrast to "Johnny, dear, mother would prefer that you not make that noise just now" is the essential element of the style difference under consideration. The second version makes it clear to the speaker of formal language that the mother regarded Johnny as a good person, that she wanted him to stop but recognized that he might not if making noise were really important to him, and that making loud noises might be allowable at some other time than the present. The admonition to "Shut up" might not necessarily lead the child to conclude that he wasn't loved. The child might reason that the mother was feeling bad. However, he could hardly conclude that there might be some situation in which he could legitimately make noise. He would more than likely conclude that there were some persons with whom he might get away with it. Thus, while one can't identify how many of the contingencies are left open for interpretation after the first message, there are probably fewer after the second. Imbedded in the broader information set of formal language are premises about interpersonal relations which are different from those included in the public language in that they motivate further verbal exploration.

Bernstein assumes that public language is more appropriate for some purposes — all formal language speakers use public language on occasions. But not all public language speakers master formal speech. Some people do not have the skill to categorize by multiple criteria and to indicate subtle gradations of relationships. Without this ability, reliance on public speech is absolute. There seems to be a disposition for the speaker restricted to public language to interpret formal language communication. A public language speaker may respond to formal clarification simply by stating, "That's what I said," being unwilling to admit the ignorance of an alternate phrasing, which, when translated in his mind, is in fact no more precise. It is also possible for many lower

class persons to read for pleasure without modifying their spoken vocabulary; in part, because they do not catch the subtleties of what they read, in part because they have so few opportunities for such roles in which they can comfortably respond in formal language. Expressed in terms of life styles, lower classes ask their visitor to take off his jacket and speak public language; the middle classes put on the formal language when jackets are required, and the elite classes tend to talk formally at play and at work — and frequently even when drunk.

If one asks whether it is true that lower class persons are more frequently limited to public speech, the answer would again seem to be yes. It is the next question that contains the catch: Why is this distinction maintained? Is it enough to say that lower class children speak public language because their parents do, or because they, and their parents, have less education? Both are true, but do we make an error in assuming that because higher education and formal speech capacity are so often associated, that it is education, particularly the bookish kind, which creates it? If we take the middle class mother's elaborated suggestion that her child be quiet as simply an instance in which she is socializing her child to participate in a polite middle class interaction we may be correct. But we need a more analytic explanation, if we are to fully identify the conditions which promote maximum refinement of verbal skills.

### **Communication and Power Relations**

Consider for a moment the function of the group: sociability, work, etc. In sociability groups like cocktail parties, the importance of expressive gratification is high. The smaller the group, the greater the participation of each person; for this reason, people tend to break into groups of two or three. The conversation tends to be linked together only to the extent that it is necessary to build upon, or relate in a slight degree to the remarks of the other. The conversation is thus continuously divergent. The topics of conversation frequently have the function of establishing the identity of the participant, or establishing the solidarity and value consensus of those present — frequently by judicious gossip about the behavior of persons who are mutually known. Such sociable interaction illustrates conditions under which participants are motivated to talk and their remarks are under very mild review as to their relevance or accuracy.

Sociability groups may be compared with work groups situations in which problems of a routine nature are reiteratively present. When such problems are handled by something like a family unit, the respective duties soon fall into patterned allocation and the resources for conversation are produced by the unfolding events of daily life. In



such groups, if there is a democratic atmosphere, a consensus will grow about agreed-upon premises or norms. These serve as a kind of shorthand reference to previous conversations, and conserve the time of the participants as they face daily decisions. The potent familiarity of this process sometimes hides from recognition the very complicated social behavior which is involved.

For example, the presence of both a father and a mother who are relatively equal in power provides a child with a motivation to attend closely to the state of normative integration. If he knows that the value emphasis of one parent is slightly different from that of the other, he is provided an incentive to act so as to win advantages from this insight. The task is made more complicated and challenging when there is great warmth and consensus between the parents. A child not only has to make his move at the right time with a strong case, he must also be sure that the ensuing action does not exceed the threshold of protest of the other parent, who might then, through the parental solidarity relation, object as a point of privilege. The existence of two persons of power with small value differences, yet parallel commitment to a core of common values, creates a situation in which careful use of language and recognition of subtle differences is required to attain personal goals.

More generally, secure membership in a relatively stable group creates motivation to attain collective goals which require further communication. The middle class family needs a car which is clean, appropriate and not too expensive, and a home in neighborhood with good schools and similar people. Yet the new home must not entail an imprudent sale of the old house or the disruption of the adolescent children's high school associations. The children must have lots of dates but not become too intimate. Commitments to bowling as opposed to work on the church newsletter must be balanced. These and things like them all proceed under the discipline of two economic processes. First, there is the economic allocation of money; second, there is the economic allocation of time.

So long as co-participants have slightly different utilities to be achieved from expenditure of resources, the requirements for carefully monitored discussion are present. A premium is set upon accuracy in the description of the external world, consistency in argument, and, most importantly, awareness of the degree to which a given action impinges upon others.

In this somewhat ideal-typic description of the middle class home, we do not imply that because of the surface appearance of equalitarian functioning, one cannot recognize the greater essential power of the parents. Parental pressure exceeds the resistance most children can

mobilize, but importantly, only in those rare circumstances which require full mobilization of power. We feel that role inductions in operating social systems can take place under conditions in which the full mobilization of power is only rarely required.

One important meaning of there being a correspondence between the norms of a family and the norms of the larger community relates to the absolute power of each member of the family. With the increase of integration into the larger community, there is an expansion of the gradations of inducement and resistance the participants can use as they argue the relevance of various norms for the action in question. The time required to review these considerations is democratizing, because during the longer period required to reach a full showdown, extraneous events often produce some other challenge to the system of relationships. Such challenges may distract attention from the controversy by requiring a collective response, which if successful, adds to the solidarity of the system. A longstanding argument between a boy and his father over the boy's choice of a university may be more easily resolved after the two of them have worked together to paint the garage.

The importance of the duration of the period of assumed equality which goes before a show of power may be illustrated by the example of other systems. Such relations are most successful when the low-power person has little strength in the larger community and is convinced that his life opportunities depend upon his relationship with the stronger. When the tensions of the relation mount, the typical response of the low-power person is to escape by disengagement. To state the point in still another way, a low-power person will talk longest and most inventively in resistance to another's inducement when both are near middle rank in a system with normative consensus and when compliance with the other's inducement would reduce the actor's rank.

In family interaction studies it is one observation that the ultimate disposition of revealed differences is recognized after about one-third of the conversation, the remaining two-thirds of the discussion is devoted to explaining how the original difference did not arise from a difference in values but rather from the solution of some different example. There is no loss of rank (in this instance the term "face" is also appropriate) as a result of the concession of one member to achieve consensus. The group's disposition to play and re-play the game of verbal flourishes in the defense of rank is the source of the urge to talk well.

From this point of view one would avoid overestimating the importance of the sheer mass of printed and visual stimulus material which are found in a middle class home. There are histories of isolated

children having read themselves into a degree of specialization that establish their later career. This, obviously, could not have taken place if the materials were not present. But to a degree that few have recognized, good readership is motivated by the anticipation of the relevance such information will have to later interaction. The problem encountered in the home and solved by reference to the encyclopedia both effects a change which permits all participants to know what was decided and at the same time reassures the child that what he learns can be relevant to what he does. The relevance of an external and validated source of knowledge to the increase of an individual's absolute power is dependent upon the consensus in the group that validated knowledge can be the basis of action. This is particularly true, both inside the family and out, so long as the wherewithal to respond to expectations lags no more than might be made up by careful attention to detail in the future, then validated actions may be selected between — and argued about — in order to see if the expectation may be met. Whenever it is clear that no matter how hard one tries he can't both replace the car, have dental work done, rent extra space, etc., then an important tension goes out of the system. The motivation for verbal flourishes is lost. The delay to consider all factors is purposeless.

### *The Situation of the Dependent Poor*

The stable lower class, who still meet necessary expectations on a somewhat more limited spectrum of institutional expectations tend to do so at the cost of expending their reserve. Their security system then becomes a set of social relationships in which the common identity themes communicable by public language prevail. Muir and Weinstein describe the attempt of the lower lower class (from which the ADC mother is excluded):

To evolve a way of life that will reduce his insecurity and enhance his power in ways that do not depend on achievement in the universalistic sector and on command of a rich and sophisticated variety of perspectives. He can do this by forging a network of relationships, with people similarly circumstanced, that is in some ways like a mutual insurance scheme. People linked by such a network provide one another with a sense of status and worth, and also with aid and support in time of need. . . . Such a network differs from a conventional insurance scheme in that the kinds of benefits to which one is entitled are not specified in advance . . . but consist broadly of "help in time of trouble" . . . and of "doing whatever he can" when another is in need.

If one has a sufficiently extensive network of such obligations, and he has honored his obligations in the past, there is probably someone he can

<sup>10</sup>Muir, Donald E., and Weinstein, Eugene A. "The Social Debt: An Investigation of Lower Class and Middle Class Norms of Social Obligation," *JSM*, 27, August 1962, p. 538.

turn to if ever he should need help . . . until he is "back on his feet." Title to these benefits is not tied to incumbency of specific roles, approaches through prescribed channels, or conformity to legalistic requirements. On the contrary the relationships are valued precisely because they are not hedged about by such conditions . . . they are diffuse, reciprocal, durable and particularistic.

In contrast with lower class persons, the dependent poor in the Great Cities, suffer the even greater deprivation of being reduced to fearfulness of their neighbors. Let me illustrate this concretely with comments elicited from Negro mothers who are receiving Aid to Dependent Children. The comments are elicited by having the mothers listen to recordings of other Negro women's spontaneous comments upon what it means to be an ADC, how hard it is for a Negro man to get a job, why one doesn't want a man in the house if there are daughters, why it's foolish to think of marriage or divorce, etc. The mothers talk from 5 to 7 minutes after each stimulus from an interviewer who rarely speaks but just nods with interest as the remarks are recorded.

This is a free response of one mother talking about the threat of rape. The sentence structure has been slightly clarified and dialect eliminated, but otherwise these quotations are of interest as examples of public language, as well as expressions of a sense of threat.

We had that two times since I've been in the building, but that's in the back apartment where you can see the husband or whatever man is sleeping in leave. The first time the man came on the first floor. He came through her kitchen window and he had a knife against her child and told her if she said anything he was going to kill her and so he tried to do it to the mama and she screamed and he went to get the child and that's when she got to the door. When she got to the door she left him in there with her child and that's the part I wouldn't have done. He'd just have had to kill me. She got the girl across the hall's husband to go down there and get that man out of her house. So when they got down there, he was gone.

The meaning of the triple locks Chicago Negroes place on their doors may be inferred from the following comments on transiency and fear of disasters.

As soon as someone moves out, someone else moves in. Before you can get acquainted with them, they've moved out. They don't be there long enough for you to know their names. But all the old tenants from when I moves in there are gone.

And another mother commented.

Because so much fires breaking out, I don't want to leave the children. It's hard to get somebody to keep them, it's dangerous to leave them by themselves. So that means I don't hardly get a chance to go nowhere. I'm



scared to leave them at the house by themselves because so much fire breaking out. I just sit at the house all day long with the children. I just never go nowhere. I suspect that when I get around people I get nauseated, just nauseated. I just can't stand a crowd of people. I would like to get back to school, but my nerves are too bad. I don't think I could take it. If I was there, my mind would be right back at home with my girl, she's a young lady now, and I'd be afraid to leave her in the house by herself.

To support the thesis that the isolated Negro mother's socialization strategy is designed to cope with violence from hostile neighbors, let me quote one mother's comment upon her style of childrearing.

When I go to the store I tell the children, don't open that door for Jesus. And they won't, cause I know my worker came and he wouldn't let her in and she said but I'm Mrs. X and he said I'm sorry, but you can wait outside, and she'll be back and sure enough, I came in before she left the building and she said he wouldn't let her in and I said if he lets you in he might let someone else in. I told him don't open that door for Jesus. You know what that means. He's a spirit and that's the only thing that can go through. Anybody can say, "I'm the case worker."

The uneasy strategy that emerges is one of not getting too involved. One ADC mother states it very reflectively: "I just visit a few people. If the group gets too big there's confusion. I have coffee every couple mornings with just two now. I used to be guilty of visiting around out of loneliness and lack of self control. You need people to do favors and fight loneliness." If you are too close to people, you can become overwhelmed by demands they might make in times of great need. A child can be taken care of while a friend comes in for a "nap", but more complicated actions relating to signal systems at the door seem bafflingly difficult to arrange.

The way in which distrust of others prevents the growth of institutions which capitalize on cooperation was illustrated by the mothers' reactions to a hypothetical cooperative housing project. This project would have involved private apartments for the mothers and their small children, and dormitories for the older children. A common kitchen would have reduced the labor of food preparation. The reasons given revealed their lack of trust of others: they were concerned about the stealing of food and the possibility that some people would fail to carry their share of responsibilities. Seven of the nine also rejected having their older children sleep away from them on the grounds that they would learn bad practices from others, it would lead to fights between the parents, and it would require excessive supervision. One mother felt that it might not be sanitary and only one mother thought the children might not like it.

The rudimentary simplicity of the systems of relations of the ADC family starts of course with the absence of a continuously visible and

effective father. Dealing with sexually differentiated adults who are, in some degree, in league with one another gives experience which is both role-defining with regard to the self and may be a sensible preparation for talking one's way through the complex bureaucracies of adult life.

Just as the absences of membership in larger collectivities deprives the mother of external supports it also deprives the child of an introduction to complexity of role relations. Since mother's brothers are not important, the deprivation which attends the absence of a father is *not* compensated for. It is our guess that in the absence of such experience with organizational complexity, an individual does not learn to see the actions of others as arising from organizational role expectations. Negro corner boys report no clear notion of who was boss on jobs from which they have withdrawn after having been placed by an employment counselor. Persons who knock at a door are reacted to as if they loomed up out of a cloud; there is no premise about the organization which sponsored the visitors. There is a disposition to assume that relations can continue so long as they are closely balanced as to the satisfactions provided, but this implies that if either person chooses, the relation may be terminated and thereby cease to exist. There is no thought that a relationship bond will sustain an exchange which is seriously imbalanced over a protracted period. This is the crucial mechanism by which the reduction of absolute power undercuts the motivation for verbally indicated inductions and resistances.

Our staff can scarcely remember ever having been in one of the ADC homes, without encountering another adult there. Yet in the interviews, many of the respondents insist that there is no one to whom they can turn if they were in trouble. There is widespread evidence of an uneasy tension between the need to affiliate and fear of involvement. There is a code of cooperation against the threat of collectors and investigative agents, but the rapid shift in residence erodes a sense of security. If you have made friends once, you do not want to try again, at least, not every six months. In contrast, in the squalid and tiny houses of the slums of Rio de Janeiro, many people have lived next to one another for as many as 18 years. One concludes from many studies that the more stable the residence patterns, the lower the sense of threat from one's neighbors.

This sense of threat interacts with other elements of Negro culture. Mothers wean children later, but more abruptly; feed on demand and report few feeding problems. These mothers start bowel training later but take less time, and their children are more frequently enuretic at later ages. Negro ADC mothers are less responsive to crying and less punitive toward dependency. They exert strong pressure against



masturbation and sex play and are strict in modesty training. They are not permissive of aggression toward parents and siblings, and they place more restrictions upon physical mobility. Although they expect less of the children in terms of performance of household tasks, they are more strict about obedience.

The ADC mothers' training techniques include more physical punishment and little use of praise, positive models and reasoning. Isolation and withdrawal of privileges are rare. They reward and punish their children immediately and their children are rarely required to delay gratification. The failure to discipline in terms of language symbols as well as the related dependence upon physical means of punishment reduces the necessity for cognitive mediation in impulse control. The child gets much less assistance in discovering the relationship between his behavior and the responses it is likely to elicit.

A middle class mother would be surprised by the amount of the Negro ADC mother's energies which go into admonishing the child to "be good" instead of rewarding and punishing for acts freely entered into. In the context of an over-crowded living space, "being good" means being physically inactive, verbally non-participative and non-observant. It is not that the achievements of the child are negatively viewed; rather, it is the problem that achievement activity may lead to that which is so consistently avoided. The mothers are extremely vulnerable to threat, which is serious and unpredictable, and their children are taught to be cautious and fearful.

### *Implications of Intervention*

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that in the degree the Negro ADC mothers and Negro gang boys I've studied are representative of culturally deprived persons, the educational intervention must reduce fear and motivate verbal participation by increasing the absolute power of the child in the school setting. Middle class educational objectives can not be seriously undertaken in the absence of some equivalent of stable lower class security systems.

Beyond this, the children must be given the opportunity to make decisions, and permitted to suffer the consequences of their decisions. If they have book stamps which may be spent for classroom materials, each student must have some say as to how his stamp is used. If every child chooses to buy the same book, the class must be given the opportunity to see how much better another class has done in obtaining a variety of books. If the class chooses to decorate their room in a garish way, they must live in it also. If factions grow concerning the allocation of reserves, they should be encouraged to test alternatives which do not lead to the immediate amalgamation of the factions.

There should be student organizations broader than a given class room. Through these organizations, the student must be given the opportunity to make suggestions for administrative consideration which are not cleared by their teachers. Each child should have a friendly contact with an adult in the school who is as powerful as the child's teacher, but who has no authority over the child. Older children should be given the motivation of reducing the length of their school day by getting their work done early. They should be permitted to organize so as to participate in the determination of what is a fair day's work.

These suggestions may never be tried, or, if they are tried, they may be defective in detail, but the underlying principle should be clear. The broader the range of problems an individual approaches as a member of a group, and the larger the number of working groups participated in, the greater his experience in explaining the external situation and in taking the role of the other in order to increase the relevance of his inducements to get the group to follow a given course of action. Though the implications of this process are profound, the preparation for it occurs almost unconsciously in primary groups whose members have different skills, work to do, and a concern about consensus; that is, in groups like the middle class family. It is this hidden curriculum which is absent both from the schools and the culturally deprived family which must be added to accomplish the objectives of compensatory education.

## *Working with Parents of Disadvantaged Children*

SAMUEL SHEPARD, JR.

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attended school in Missouri and took three degrees from the University of Michigan. He is one of those rare individuals who has written well, yet has had even more articles written *about* him in local and national publications, including *Time*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and *Readers Digest*. He is both thinker and doer. Among his honors are "Omega Man of the Year," "Citizen of the Year" (Mound City Press Club of St. Louis), and "Page-One-Award" (St. Louis Newspaper Guild.) He served in the Army Air Corps and was a high school teacher and athletic coach at Kansas City, Missouri. His greatest contributions, however, have been in St. Louis, where he has served as Assistant Supervisor of Physical Education, Elementary School Principal, Assistant Director, then Director, of Elementary Education. Since 1962 he has been Assistant Superintendent, in charge of the Bancker District of St. Louis. The phenomenal success of his work with fellow Negroes of this district has gained international recognition.

### **Foreword**

Among the more recent social phenomena that characterize and complicate modern living, particularly within the United States, that of urbanization must be regarded as having as great an importance and as numerous implications as any. Presently, more than 61 per cent of the population of this nation live in metropolitan areas. Moreover, according to studies and analyses of research data, there is every indication that urban growth will continue at an accelerated rate. As would be expected, such a rapid, indeed, almost revolutionary change in the style of living of so many people has given rise to complex social problems the ramifications of which seem likely to test severely the very foundation of democratic society as we know it. Most certainly, the solution of these problems will tax to an unprecedented degree the ingenuity and resourcefulness of every agency of society — especially the school — as well as the willingness of the people in every region of this country to live up to the ideals and promises which collectively constitute the American Dream.

of our cities has been *social stratification*, or perhaps more accurately stated, *social fragmentation* based on socio-economic factors, sub-cultural differences, and ethnical accidents. Ordinarily, and under the more normal conditions that obtain during a period of slow growth in urban areas, the formal educational opportunities made available to "all of the children of all of the people" would tend to minimize such social fragmentation. But, these are not normal times, and the social and psychological forces which are concomitants of these times — as we shall see later in this paper — make difficult, if not unlikely, the normal processes of acculturation and social assimilation usually brought about largely through education.

The large city today is not a homogeneous entity; its people do not share a body of common beliefs, aspirations, and behavior patterns. It cannot be regarded, by any stretch of the imagination, as a melting pot in which the various races and sub-cultural groups, which fill its boundaries and spill over into its suburbs, have become amalgamated. Rather, in many ways, the American city is a sprawling hodgepodge of humanity in which sub-cultural and racial pockets exist, some in almost complete isolation. It is precisely within these islands adrift in, but not actually a part of the mainstream of American society that are found in increasing numbers Americans whose styles of living and opportunities for advancement up the social ladder are so different or so limited that they must be regarded as culturally disadvantaged. The question arises now as to the nature of this kind of disadvantage. It seems, therefore, appropriate at this time to give some consideration to this comparatively recent social phenomenon and its many dangerous implications.

### Cultural Disadvantage

Psychologists and sociologists have used several expressions to refer to those individuals who dwell within the isolated cultural pockets described above. One finds such expressions as "culturally deprived," "culturally disadvantaged," "culturally different," and even "culturally depressed." Doubtlessly, each of these appellations, to some degree, accurately describes a significant attribute of the people identified. However, it is also true that some of these expressions connote meanings that are less accurate or, indeed, erroneous as descriptions of the group or class in question. For example, when we say someone is *deprived*, we suggest, whether intentionally or not, that he has been *prevented* from acquiring something to which he is entitled. Applying this usual meaning to the full expression — "culturally deprived" — it

been *prevented* from acquiring culture!

Obviously such a suggestion is neither true nor intended because no human group can exist without a culture. Here, of course, the word "culture" refers to the beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and behavior patterns as well as the system of communication that is meaningfully employed by that group. When one speaks of the culturally deprived, he does not mean to imply that the person or group referred to is *cultureless*. Rather, what is meant is that the individual or group, though possessing a culture, does not possess to an *adequate* degree the culture of the larger or more dominant social group in which he or it now lives. Thus, the dwellers within the isolated cultural pockets, though fully and, perhaps, even exceptionally "cultured" in terms of their own group, are in a real sense *disadvantaged* relative to the culture of the mainstream of society. It is certainly quite true that this sub-cultural group does not possess to a satisfactory degree the essentials of the larger and more dominant cultural group. But, is it equally true that the individual members of the sub-group *have been* prevented from acquiring that larger culture? Actually, one cannot give a simple "yes" or "no" answer to this question. With respect to the culturally disadvantaged who happen to be white, it is perhaps more near the truth to reply that few, if any inescapable, restrictive forces are applied to them. The members of this group can, if sufficiently motivated, aspire to and actually move up to participation in the mainstream of American culture. However, when the same question applies to Negroes or other minority groups so distinguished because of the color of their skins, one has to admit that racial prejudice and discrimination have for generations served as insuperable barriers to both the acculturation and the assimilation of these groups into American society. Thus, in a very real sense, many, if not most Negroes and other people of color have actually been deprived culturally.

Nevertheless, an expression which is perhaps equally descriptive of the situation with respect to both white and non-white sub-groups, and at the same time lacking in implications of blame or guilt is "culturally disadvantaged." Whether through deprivation, lack of motivation, or other causes, an alarmingly large number of citizens of this nation are at a distinct cultural disadvantage in the large urban areas of our country.

Similarly, the expressions "culturally different" and "culturally depressed" can be shown to imply limiting and emotion-packed connotations. It is for this reason that I have preferred to use the term "culturally disadvantaged" throughout this paper. However, no matter what terminology is used, it is clear that the people referred to have



certain common mental and behavioral characteristics and live within physical and social milieux that also have common aspects. Let us briefly consider these commonalities.

### *The Mentality of the Culturally Disadvantaged*

For many people the term "mentality" refers exclusively to intellectual capacity as distinguished from ability. Such a limited definition is unfortunate because it does not include, as it properly should, such other very important aspects of mind as: (1) mental abilities that have been developed or learned through experience; (2) the whole range of affective reactions which are the foundation of an individual's value-attitudinal system, his need system, his self-image, and his behavioral tendencies — all strongly pre-dispositional forces; and (3) volition. It is in the light of this broadened definition that we inquire into and seek to describe the mentality which generally characterizes culturally disadvantaged adults and their children.

### *Cultural Disadvantage and Intelligence*

Few writers would admit that they believe or imply by their statements that the culturally disadvantaged are less intelligent than are other sub-cultural groups in society. Yet, many of these same writers advocate curriculum, teaching techniques and learning materials that are basically geared to persons of limited intellectual capacities. Granted, the culturally disadvantaged — as we shall see more clearly later on — enter the formal learning situation provided by the school with little, if any readiness. This fact, however, calls for initial remediation and enrichment, not a significantly different kind of learning activity.

Let us make it quite clear that, in spite of the fact that the culturally disadvantaged have I.Q.s that are significantly lower than those of other sub-cultural groups, there is every reason to believe that the former group is not basically different in the intellectual potentialities of its members from other sub-cultural groups. The first and perhaps most convincing reason for this conclusion is the fact that to date no test of intelligence is sufficiently culture-free. Hence, scores made by the culturally disadvantaged on such test seem invalid as bases for reaching conclusions relative to general intelligence. Moreover, since these tests are, for the most part, oriented toward the middle cultural class in their content and experiential references, they place all persons whose cultural backgrounds are significantly different at a decided disadvantage.<sup>1</sup>

As for acquired or learned mental abilities, it is certainly true that, in general, these abilities in the culturally disadvantaged are significantly less functional as adjustment tools in middle class cultural milieux than are these same abilities in other more culturally favored individuals living within the same culture. Evidence of this fact may be seen in the smaller number and less complicated concepts which culturally disadvantaged children have in comparison with those of middle class children. Similarly, the language fluency of the former group suffers in comparison with that of the latter. Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to conclude from these facts that the "style of learning" of culturally disadvantaged children is basically different from those of other groups.<sup>1</sup> In short, there is no reason to accept, even for a moment, the claim that the culturally disadvantaged are incapable of high intellectual development. This conclusion, if true, implies that the curriculum goals and levels of expectation of the former group should not — certainly, need not — be different from those of the upper and middle classes.

### *Cultural Disadvantage and Values*

That the value-attitudinal systems, self-images, expectation levels, motivations, and behavioral tendencies of the culturally disadvantaged are strikingly different from those of the middle and upper cultural classes there is no doubt. It is precisely because of these mental differences that the former group is, in fact, disadvantaged within the mainstream of American culture. And, more importantly, it is precisely this aspect of mind that must be changed if the ill-effects of cultural disadvantages are to be overcome and the assimilation of large segments of our population is to become a reality. Unhappily, the limited scope of this paper does not permit a more definite discussion and description of this aspect of the culturally disadvantaged. However, in the next section dealing with the emotionality of this group, some insight into values and their compatibility with those of middle class America will be seen.

### *Cultural Disadvantage and Emotionality*

From the point of view of emotionality, it has been claimed that the culturally disadvantaged, because of the very fact of disadvantage, are subjected to greater stress and strains than are other more culturally favored groups. The implication, if this assertion is factual, might be that generally this group is less stable emotionally and have attitudes that are generally negative. Studies of the culturally disadvantaged tend

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Dyer, S. S. Tomkins, R. H. Turner, and S. L. Washburn, *Race and Intelligence—An Evaluation of the Anti-defamation League of B'nai B'rith*, New York, 1963.

<sup>1</sup> Reference is made here to Frank Riessman's "The Strategy of Style," a paper prepared for Mobilization for Youth, Inc., New York: Columbia University, 1963.

to support this claim.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, when we take cognizance of another factor which, though often concomitant with cultural disadvantage, is not related to it either in a causal or a necessary way, we observe that emotional instability is almost an inevitable fact. Reference is made here to race. Many of the culturally disadvantaged are Negroes, and a significant majority of Negroes are culturally disadvantaged — here, the word "deprived" might be more applicable. Generation after generation has inherited the onus of slavery, discrimination, and segregation in almost every walk of life. The result of the ego structure of these people is as obvious as it is horrifying.

### *The Children and Their Parents*

It is not uncommon to find five to six children together with their parents and sometimes even their grandparents forced to live in one or two rooms which have been euphemistically called "efficiency apartments." These "apartments" frequently are completely devoid of even the most commonplace conveniences. For example, a private bathroom is almost never provided. Indeed, if there is a bathroom at all, usually it must be shared with two to as many as six other families. Moreover, such a bathroom, for obvious reasons, is usually in the last stages of disrepair. Central heating and hot running water are practically unheard of.

It takes no stretch of the imagination to see that such living conditions do not begin to meet the minimal requirements for physical hygiene, to say nothing of those for mental and moral wholesomeness. Reports that conditions such as these foster and nurture all kinds of social evils and crimes are not, I assure you, exaggerations.

But, there is yet another horror. The policies and practices governing the administration of the various forms of public assistance and, in many instances, patterns of racial discrimination in employment and in union membership stretching back over generations have reduced the male adult member of many Negro families to the status of a *DRONE* — a figure which by American standards has been emasculated by the forces surrounding him. He now ceases to be an ideal model of masculinity with which his sons can identify! So, not only do we find among too many children of the slums the absence of a desirable father image, but we are also shocked even more by the absence of the father himself! And worse, because of its disruptive effect upon and real threat to society, a pervading *SENSE OF INSECURITY* and a *GROWING, PRIDE-DESTROYING DOUBT OF THE WORTHINESS AND DIGNITY OF SELF* permeates the lives of these children!

<sup>1</sup>William Moore, Jr. *The Culturally Disadvantaged Pre-School Negro Child*. St. Louis, Missouri: Ph.D. Dissertation, Saint Louis University, June, 1964.

It is not surprising, then, that a pall of *LETHARGY* and frustration, of defeat and even despair — resulting as it inevitably does in *LOW LEVELS OF ASPIRATION* — hangs over the heads of so many children and parents in the Bancker District, and penetrates deeply into their hearts, dulling their values and their will.

Let us for a moment take a brief look at these parents. It is not too difficult to understand why so many of them — long-standing victims of racial prejudice and especially of job discrimination — either have had little opportunity for formal education or have been unable, as a result of such debilitating experiences, to see the *WORTH* of whatever educational opportunities were offered. In short, many Negro parents have acquired *INCOMPATIBLE VALUE SYSTEMS* which during their own youth disposed them to take little, if any, advantage of educational facilities. As a consequence, a greatly disproportionate number are now unskilled, possessing nothing to sell on the employment market! They must now be the recipients of charity, resort to crime and violence to obtain a livelihood, or earn wages so low that hardly the bare necessities of life can be obtained for themselves and for their children.

Can anyone marvel at the kind of atmosphere — moral, physical, and cultural — such parents are able to provide for their children? Can anyone expect among such family units anything but a spirit of *DEFEAT, FRUSTRATION*, and *HOSTILITY*? Indeed, the marvel is that there is *any* orientation at all toward socially acceptable patterns of behavior and any aspiration of any kind toward upward social and economic mobility!

### *Social and Economic Factors*

A word or two, describing the physical environs of the culturally disadvantaged, whether black or white, will give added insight into the reasons for and causes of the developed attitudes and values described above.

The culturally disadvantaged live, for the most part, in the inner core of the city. This section is frequently referred to as the "inner city." It is a transitional area located in the oldest part of the city and consisting of neighborhoods of sub-standard dwellings or newly-built high-rise housing developments. In these are found chiefly in-migrants from rural areas who constitute cultural and often racial minorities. Often, however, Negroes of the inner city are not primarily recent in-migrants from the South, but first and second generation descendants of such in-migrants. Because of years of isolation in cultural and racial

<sup>2</sup>In the Bancker District, a survey revealed that most of the children were born in St. Louis as were also many of their parents.



enclaves, these "urbanics" are still outside of the mainstream of American culture.

Except for the housing projects, most of the dwellings in this area were built prior to the beginning of this century and consist of two and three-story buildings that were once stately private homes and mansions. These have been converted into multiple-family dwellings by absentee landlords and rented to families with many children. In almost every case the buildings are in the last stages of deterioration. The entire section of the city is characterized by high population density and excessive mobility.

We are now ready for a summarizing statement regarding the culturally disadvantaged adult. In general, culturally disadvantaged parents are unskilled or only semi-skilled; they possess little formal education and have low levels of aspiration. Living in a physical environment characterized by drabness, filth, and dilapidation, these adults see little hope in the future either for themselves or for their children. Worse still, they frequently feel themselves alienated from the mainstream of society and have limited access to and even more limited acquaintance with the social graces and such tangible manifestations of middle class culture as art exhibits, concerts, good literature, and the theatre. Often, because they are unfamiliar with these cultural opportunities, they are hostile to urban living and find themselves in conflict with its values, standards, and requirements.

Because of these parental attitudes and backgrounds, and because also of the generally inadequate income of these parents, the children of the culturally disadvantaged have to stay close to home and, as a result, have very few opportunities to experience either directly or vicariously those aspects of life which make for *readiness* for formal education and for the development of high incentives. These youngsters have inadequate experiential backgrounds, language development, and motivation. Worse still, they tend to adopt suspicious or hostile attitudes toward the school, which for them stands as a symbol of the power structure or of the middle class from which they have been excluded. They are, then, in a very real sense severely handicapped even before they enter school. Having identified with their parents, culturally disadvantaged children also have severely crippled self-images, low levels of expectancy, and little orientation toward school or the society it represents.

### *Changes Needed Relative to Culturally Disadvantaged Adults*

As suggested earlier, it is the ego-structure of culturally disadvantaged parents that must be drastically altered. Values which are negative in terms of the legitimate values held by the dominant cultural

group must be made more positive. Attitudes, styles of behavior, aspirations, and — above all — levels of formal education must be raised. Obviously, changes such as these constitute a formidable task which could conceivably stretch over several generations. But, the question arises as to whether our democratic society can wait that long.

Since we are reasonably certain as to *what* must be changed — the ego-structure — and the new configuration it must take — one more like that which is characteristic of the middle class in the United States — it should not be too difficult to arrive at some basic guidelines as to what kinds of programs society, through its various agencies, must provide. Perhaps, though, a word or two are in order to support the contention that *the ego-structure of culturally disadvantaged adults must be made more like that of the middle class*. Unhappily again, the scope of this paper will not permit the presentation of a detailed argument. It is possible, however, to identify the main aspects of such proof. First, it can be shown that since the culturally disadvantaged are not unlike adults of other cultural sub-groups in general intelligence, they can be expected to develop as lofty values, attitudes, levels of aspiration, and patterns of social behavior as the members of any group. Thus, it is a matter of simple fact that these attributes generally possessed by the middle class are well within the grasp of the culturally disadvantaged. Certainly, these traits characterize the mainstream of American culture and society.

As for the loftiness and desirability of middle class values, attitudes, and styles of behavior (an interest in and concern for order, cleanliness, industry, perseverance, honesty, justice, active participation in government, good citizenship, broad formal education, the high development of human capacities, strong and durable family units, strongly motivational child-rearing practices) are not only rational, for the most part, but are also generally essential to effective democratic living and, more importantly, are in harmony with the dignity of human nature. Since we in the United States are committed to such a life, and since this kind of life is possible only if most of these values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns prevail and give direction to group life, it follows that *all* members of our society need to develop these desirable attributes — not because they are presently in vogue and are held by the middle class, but because they *flow as logical necessities from the very nature of democratic life*. It is possible, therefore, to say that the culturally disadvantaged need to acquire middle class values, attitudes, aspirations, and the like, first, because these traits characterize the mainstream of American culture, and second, which fact is incidentally more important, because these attributes are in harmony with human nature as it realizes itself in a democratic society.



Three major changes within the culturally disadvantaged mentality and his environment must be made, and made soon. It is possible in this paper to do no more than enumerate these changes. First, the self-image of the culturally disadvantaged adult must be significantly improved. These individuals must see themselves as persons who are truly worthy of respect by society and capable of making valuable as well as desired contributions to it. Obviously, racial or religious discriminations and segregation are impediments which cannot be allowed to continue in American life.

Very likely related in a causal way to the positive self-image identified above is the following change in the environmental conditions in which culturally disadvantaged adults live. There must be widened and a greater number of opportunities for these adults to gain a fuller measure of formal education. Only through such development will they be in a better position for re-training in those vocational areas that are providing increasing job opportunities. For the Negro adult, there is a need for another increased opportunity — the freedom to obtain housing which is more in keeping with his income and wishes. Nothing is more demoralizing and image-destroying than the not-so-subtle, yet constant reminder of inferior status made by forced living in ghettos. Along with this expanded freedom must come another — the opportunity and encouragement to participate in every phase of life in these United States.

Needed also, are other significant changes within the mentality of the culturally disadvantaged. Probably, these would flow from a more positive self-image, but it also seems that a special effort on the part of the larger community will be required to bring them about in a relatively short time. Reference is made here to the mores, behavior patterns, and communication skills of the culturally disadvantaged. These traits must be improved to the degree that they are more in keeping with those of adults who represent the mainstream of American culture. It is important to note that these last changes will, in all likelihood, manifest themselves in many positive and desirable ways among which will be an awareness and acceptance of not only civic opportunities, but also social responsibilities. Especially needed, too, is a change in child-rearing practices resulting in greater concern for the experiential backgrounds of offspring and greater efforts to inspire these youngsters to high achievement in life.

### *General Means for Effecting Changes in Attitudes and Values*

Granted that there are three basic areas relative to cultural disadvantage that must be changed. The question of primary importance is "how?" In the first place, it is clear that two of these categories of

changes are changes *within* the culturally disadvantaged adult himself. The third category consists of changes within the conditions surrounding his life. It is relatively easy to suggest general ways by which this third and external group of changes can be brought about. It will not be so easy to point out the means necessary if the two internal kinds of changes are to be effected. Therefore, we shall consider first the easier task.

### *Suggestions for Changing the Environment*

In order to improve and increase the opportunities for culturally disadvantaged adults to overcome the limitations and disadvantages imposed upon them by the culture of their sub-group, it will be necessary for the dominant forces within society to do the following things:

1. Community life in the urban regions of the United States must be changed drastically so that (a) prevailing patterns of discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations will no longer exist; (b) there will be a sufficient number of social agencies which will initiate and carry through programs involving culturally disadvantaged adults in decision-making which affects the larger community as well as the lives of the culturally disadvantaged; (c) there will be special programs community- and city-wide in scope designed: to improve the cultural backgrounds of adults and children, to develop and improve the marketable skills of adults, to help adults see worth in improved behavior patterns, to increase the opportunities of these adults to obtain good employment, to help raise the group's sense of pride in self and in the living conditions of its members, to improve the skills of adults in the arts of communication, and finally, to increase the parents' knowledge and conviction of the importance of education — especially *reading* — and its direct relation to better job opportunities.
2. Philanthropic organizations must seek ways in which they can help programs already in existence, or they must actually initiate such programs.
3. Volunteer groups from suburban and urban areas of greater affluence and cultural attainments must actively seek to develop programs involving and in *cooperation* with culturally disadvantaged parents.
4. Disadvantaged parents must be in on the very planning and setting up of remedial and self-improvement programs.
5. Compensatory, motivational and educational programs must be launched in the public schools.

### *Suggestions for Effecting Changes in the Self-Image*

We turn now to the more difficult changes — those that enter into and become important aspects of the personality. In this area, we are concerned with changes in the image culturally disadvantaged parents have of themselves, their value systems, their expectations in life both for themselves and their children, and their styles of behavior — especially their child-rearing practices. There is no question but that changes such as these constitute a difficult task. It is for this reason that we pause in our discussion to look into the nature of acculturation and the processes by which it is accomplished. Such an inquiry should lead to information which could serve us as guiding principles in our efforts to suggest remedial programs and projects designed to alter to a significant degree personality structures. These principles, then, would constitute a kind of rationale to underlie the most important remedial effort with culturally disadvantaged parents.

### *The Rationale Underlying Work with Culturally Disadvantaged Parents*

According to the theory of personality development and dynamics, every human being is a unique personality precisely because he has a unique heredity and a singular body of inter-personal and cultural experiences. Man, then, is in a state of continuous mental and physical change which, for want of a more descriptive name, we call "development."

Because of the almost infinite variability of the two factors of which both physical and mental development are the resultants, it is obvious that these processes might proceed in any direction and the products which they in turn bring about might take on a multitude of forms and combinations. Two questions of primary importance are at once apparent to those whose business it is to enlist the cooperation of parents and to intervene in the developmental processes of children in order to exert influence — primarily of a cognitive nature — that will guide the development of these children in a more positive and acceptable direction. These two questions might be stated somewhat as follows: (1) What are the most significant or influential factors in the process of mental development? (2) How can these factors be controlled or manipulated externally in such a way that the course of an individual's personality development will be changed to a significant degree?

Fortunately, as suggested above, psychology has given us some insight into this phenomenon and has provided a few principles which not only answer the first of these questions, but also suggest guidelines that might well lead to satisfactory answers to the second. We know, for

example, that the values, attitudes, and dominant behavior patterns which characterize a child's personality, in most instances, have been acquired by him through learning. We know, too, that this learning is itself either the result or an integral part of a somewhat complicated psycho-social process called "identification." It seems correct, then, to conclude that the basic process involved in the development of personality is this process of identification. It would follow, therefore, that the basic means to changes in personality is also through subsequent and different identifications.

Perhaps the degree to which we understand the dependent and independent variables involved in identification is the same degree to which we shall be in a position to manipulate or control changes in personality development. We turn now to a closer scrutiny and analysis of this phenomenon.

### *Identification and Internalization*

A few common and perhaps pertinent observations might prove helpful. Many of us are familiar with the fact that, in general, children adopt and reflect the values, attitudes, hopes, dreams, and even frustrations of their parents. Common parlance expresses this fact thus: "Parents have transmitted these traits to their children." We are also familiar with the fact that the members of any sub-cultural group or class usually hold the beliefs, tastes, values, attitudes, and behavior patterns of that group. The adage goes this way: "Birds of a feather flock together." Finally, though less frequent perhaps in our experience, is the phenomenon illustrated in the following examples:

1. The religious convert who is more zealous and scrupulous in his observance of the dogmas and rituals of his new belief than are most of those who were "born" into the faith. A striking example may be seen in the apostleship of St. Paul.
2. The nouveau riche who builds a more magnificent mansion and displays more snobishness and refined tastes than many of the older families of wealth and social position. "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" illustrates dramatically this type.

It is commonly said of the individuals described above that they are "out-Romaning the Romans."

In each of the three types of observations just recalled, we find an illustration either of personality building or of a significant change in an already well-structured personality. The very young child builds his own individuality, patterned in many ways after those of his parents. The member of a particular in-group experiences, through the dynamics of inter-group living, re-inforcement or strengthening of his personality



and makes important alterations when necessary in order to receive even greater ego support. But, the convert and the nouveau riche described above have made, in many instances, major alterations in their basic personality structures and behavioral patterns.

What, if any, variables do these situations have in common? Even a rather perfunctory analysis will show that in each instance, there is a *situation involving two or more human beings interacting with each other*. Equally clear also is the fact that within this inter-personal situation, one or all of the members are experiencing *need-satisfaction, ego-enhancement, and a sense of security*. How? Through what actions and reactions? Let us for a moment consider the example of the child who is in the process of constructing the general framework of his personality. What is actually happening?

The parents, in their own reactions to the various stimuli within their environment, present to the child living models which he, by virtue of the very limited nature of the inter-personal milieu in which he lives, will tend to imitate. Whether he does or does not depends on (1) the degree to which he is able to reproduce these parental models in his own behavior and (2) the degree to which his crude attempts at such imitation are rewarded by his parents. Only if both of these conditions are met will the child see his parents as sources of personal benefit — their likes, dislikes, attitudes, and ways of behaving as reactions worthy of copying. When this understanding has been developed, the child has *IDENTIFIED* with his parents, and when he actually adopts their outlook and their style of behavior as his own, he has also *INTERNALIZED*.

By analysis, a similar causal relationship can be shown to very likely exist in each of our earlier illustrations. It would seem, then, that the causative variables in identification and internalization are these commonalities? But what are these commonalities? It appears that the single essential force in these two mental processes is *NEED-SATISFACTION* or *EGO-ENHANCEMENT*. There must be present within the situation a model whose values, attitudes, and ways of reacting to ordinary stimuli, if adopted, are seen as direct means to the satisfaction of an individual's needs and to his sense of ego-fulfillment.

The implication is clear: He who would play an effective role in altering another individual's personality — his values, attitudes, tastes, and style of behavior, and above all, his aspirations — must himself be a source of *GREATER* need-satisfaction and ego-enhancement than are present models. In short, the person who would bring about personality change, must become a more persuasive model with whom the person to be changed willingly *IDENTIFIES* and *IMITATES*!

### *Implications for Changing the Self-Image of Culturally Disadvantaged Adults*

The implications of these principles are clear and offer specific suggestions as to the course of action that must be employed in any program designed to change the self-images, values, attitudes, and levels of aspirations of culturally disadvantaged parents. For one thing, those who work with the culturally disadvantaged must avoid, at almost all costs, any air or hint of *condescension*. To this end, special care must be taken in both language usage and actions to convince parents from this cultural sub-group that they are genuinely respected, not pitied. One must not suggest courses of action or adjustment which, by their very nature, imply either inferiority of the parent or that charity is being offered. A very special effort must be made not to further isolate the parent or his cultural group from the mainstream of American society.

But, respect for the person is not enough; neither will it be convincing to point out what the disadvantaged parent *ought* to believe in, *ought* to value highly, or *ought* to do. What is needed from those who earnestly desire to help improve the ego-structure of these adults is *concrete proof* that the changes recommended will redound to the immediate and lasting improvement of the lot of the parent and his child. Also needed — especially by Negro parents — is *living proof in society that these changes will not continue to be useless* and without personal benefit because of the persistence of racial animosities which continue to manifest themselves in unjust discrimination and segregation. In short, the person seeking to help bring about significant changes in the personality of the culturally disadvantaged Negro must present himself not only as a model worthy of imitation because such imitation demonstrably results in the attainment of real personal benefits, but also as a model who *CAN* be imitated regardless of difference of race and cultural background.

It seems logical, therefore, to conclude that workers with disadvantaged parents must, to the extent possible, live among them, share their problems, and offer living examples of the attitudes, values, and activities that are necessary to the solution of these problems. These inter-personal relationships must be characterized by respect, sincerity, and cooperation.

One might ask if Negro models would be better for Negro disadvantaged parents than white ones. The answer is simple: No model, black or white, will be identified with unless that model personifies traits, values, and behavior patterns which the parents *SEE AS BENEFICIAL* to him. There is, however, a need for Negro parents and children as well to see themselves in a better light. This change in the self-image,



no doubt, will be facilitated if models of outstanding Negroes are presented and by their very presence establish as fact that the Negro can rise to positions of worth, respect, and responsibility within the community.

### *The Role of the School*

In the list of suggestions presented earlier in this paper for changing the mentality of culturally disadvantaged parents — both black and white — it was pointed out that among the things which society as a whole must do is that of providing *compensatory*, motivational, and educational programs for both adults and their children. Obviously, the one agency in society whose raison d'être is the promotion of learning through formal education is the school. This fact should not be interpreted to mean that the school is competent to tackle and solve the whole problem of cultural disadvantage. It is abundantly clear from the list of suggested remedial activities that many can be initiated and carried through only by the whole of society.

The school, however, is competent in the area of learning. For this reason, the school is perhaps the best agent to start and coordinate a number of remedial programs that deal with and seek to bring about changes in knowledge which, of course, is the basis for changes in values and attitudes. The following are concrete ways in which the school can and should help overcome the ill-effects of cultural disadvantage on parents: (1) make available on extra-school time its buildings and personnel; (2) conduct adult-education courses; (3) make extensive and repeated efforts to contact parents and show by action as well as words that the school respects them, wants to help them improve themselves as well as their children, and has a program especially designed for them as adults; (4) provide information to parents relative to social services and responsibilities, work opportunities, simple and workable child-rearing practices; (5) provide information on family budgeting and the responsibilities of good citizenship — especially the importance of voting; and (6) stress the importance of hygienic health practices.

In short, the school, through these and other activities, can convince culturally disadvantaged parents that education is the *best single means* that they and their children have for moving up to full participation in American life. The school will accomplish this goal only if every activity it sponsors involving parents is a *concrete lesson or experience which proves that a particular change in thinking and behaving brings with it a corresponding good for the parent and his children.*

We in the Banneker District have had a measure of success in our efforts to help parents acquire a more positive image of themselves and

greater hope for their children. Although it is not possible in this paper to give detailed descriptions of the various projects employed for this purpose, I shall mention at least two and identify their main features.

Every parent in the Banneker District is asked *directly* to become a *HOMEWORK MANAGER*. Specific suggestions — not directions — are given to each parent as to how he or she can fulfill successfully the role of manager. In addition, a specially prepared Homework Assignment Notebook is given to each child so that he will have concrete and specific information to show to his parents relative to his daily homework assignments. This project *involves* the parent directly and meaningfully in an academic effort. Such personal and significantly worthwhile involvement helps parents to know with certainty that they are, indeed, important partners in a program aimed at helping their children prepare for a better life.

Still another project is the annual series of *NIGHT MEETINGS* with parents. The purpose of these meetings is to bring the parents up-to-date on the academic status of their children, current trends in the world of work, and the various projects and programs which will be provided that year for both adults and children. A special effort is made during these *rallies* to give parents living proof in the form of outstanding Negro men and women that opportunities for economic and social advancement are, indeed, available to them and their children.

In these, as in all projects especially designed for parents, an effort is made to convince them that they as parents are not only wanted by the school as partners in this motivational endeavor, but are also greatly needed. In a word, parents are shown that they are *SOMEBODY* and that without their active cooperation, the school's greatest effort in this area will fall short of success.

### *Summary*

Urbanization, a comparatively recent social phenomenon, has brought to a crucial point the ill-effects of different and often incompatible sub-cultures dwelling as pockets within the mainstream of society in the United States. Today in increasing numbers, many Americans who come to urban centers seeking a better life, find themselves and their children at a decided disadvantage. Knowing little of the demands of city living, frequently possessing little formal education and equally few marketable skills, and often the victims of a long-standing tradition of racial prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, these people — whether recent in-migrants or first or second generation urbanites — find it difficult, if not actually impossible, to adjust

themselves to their new or isolated life. Soon maladjustment develops into frustration and fear which, in turn, become suspicion and hostility. The end result is a vicious circle of social and cultural incompatibility which becomes more so with each passing generation, and which now threatens the very security of democratic life as we know it in the United States.

Obviously, since parents, whether culturally disadvantaged or favored, pass on to their children through the process of socialization their aspirations, their frustrations, their hopes, their dreams, and their styles of living, the first approach in any program designed to overcome cultural disadvantage must be directed at culturally disadvantaged parents. Such a program must have as its primary objective the significant changing of parental ego-structures. It must seek to help these parents see themselves as more worthy individuals who are capable of participating with dignity and in worthwhile ways in the mainstream of society. In addition, the values and attitudes of these parents must be altered so that they harmonize with those which prevail among members of the middle class. Moreover, the formal education of disadvantaged adults must be greatly extended; so also must be their vocational skills in order that these skills will be brought in line with the newer demands of industry now rapidly undergoing drastic changes through advanced technological knowledge and automation. Finally, the child-rearing practices of the disadvantaged parent must be greatly improved in order that their children will possess better values and attitudes as well as higher levels of aspirations.

When the culturally disadvantaged group is also Negro, the negative factors surrounding the lives of its members make the task of minimizing cultural disadvantage immeasurably more difficult and demand a basically compensatory effort on the part of the whole of society working through all of its agencies — not just the school.

The school is, of course, one of the agencies of society, but it cannot assume this task alone; nor should it be expected to. Nevertheless, it can initiate and coordinate many remedial programs which will do much to change parental attitudes. However, many of the social conditions that must be changed if cultural disadvantage is to be eradicated, lie within the competence of society as a whole — not of one or two of its agencies.

The challenge is great, the task is difficult, but the alternative is terrifying. Either the many pockets of culturally disadvantaged and incompatible Americans in this nation must disappear, or democratic society as we know it — in which liberty and responsibility abound and are vital — will vanish from this land. Shall we face and accept this challenge?

## *Learning in Spanish Harlem*

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One word I never thought I'd have much occasion to use is "gestalt." But the word may fit what is happening these days to American schools and American society. At any rate, there doesn't seem a better one. We might use the vernacular and call it "one big ball of wax" or repeat the lyrics of: "The neck-bone's connected to . . . arm bone, etc." But they do not have the dignity or brevity of "gestalt."

What I am trying to say is that even in our age of atomistic specialization, it becomes each day less to the point to talk about the schools — or any institution — as separate from the rest of society.

We are raising the curtain on a great creative social revolution in our country. Already it is having a more profound effect on our schools than all reforms that may be going on *inside* the schools, including the collected publications and lectures of education professors, psychologists and others.

### *Elements of the Social Revolution*

Among the elements of the current revolution are:

*Domestically*, the civil rights struggle, some key victories of liberalism in politics, especially the Kennedy-Johnson election, the liberal thrust of the Supreme Court on civil rights, and now the critical victory on reapportionment of state legislatures. The emergence of formerly silent



and dominated groups, such as in the unionization of teachers. And, of course, the war on poverty.

*On the world scene*, the main element has been the military and economic challenge of other world powers and the desire of all people — or almost all — to survive and live at peace. We seem to be taking on a strange new ally in the world, the former blood enemy who now seems to be more blood brother. And most of us can again see the virtue of political liberalism and rapid growth in the public sector of the economy. Only a relatively small, but vocal and powerful minority, are any longer convinced that federal aid to education will lead to totalitarian communism. We can relax a little, let our natural generosity emerge, and carry on our uncompleted social revolution.

Some educators have been concerned about how you get schools to change — *anything*. The answer is, you change schools by changing society.

Conversely — and here we return to our gestalt or ball of wax — you change society by changing the schools.

Significantly, the civil rights struggle began in the schools. And some of us educators who have become almost professional agitators can feel they helped set it in motion.

### ***How Speed the Revolution?***

Answers for city schools require an examination of at least two social contexts: 1) the city itself (the larger context) and 2) the neighborhood (the smaller context).

None of the big urban issues of our day — education, poverty, employment, civil rights, housing — can ignore these two contexts.

Less clear, and further off from public view, is the umbilical connection of the neighborhood and city with the state and federal systems. In these distant centers most of the strings are pulled that manipulate the lives of slum dwellers.

The neglect of the slum, (and discrimination against it), are mainly reflections of the *city's neglect* by the state and federal systems. The city (and increasingly its suburbs) stand against the state system, which is controlled by rural and business interests. When the "state system" and its political conservatism are in control of the *federal* system the city stagnates and suffers. The city is always in need of massive federal transfusions. Its own money-raising powers are limited by the state, and contributions from state funds are as sharply constricted as rural legislatures can politically manage.

The neglect of the city has produced the slum. It has also produced massive pathology in the whole city. The wounds of the slum will probably never be healed while the city's sores are raw.

Let us turn to the city, the local context, and to urban living at its worst or best: New York City, my adopted home, a "paragon" of cities, the richest in the world.

New York is like other cities, only more so. People say: It's OK for a World's Fair but not fit for habitation.

Others have said it in much stronger term. Garcia Lorca's lament was:

New York of slime

New York of wires and death . . .

Agony, agony, dream, ferment and dream

This is the world, my friend, agony, agony

The corpses decompose under the clock of the cities.

War passes weeping with a million gray rats,

The rich give to their mistresses

Small illuminated moribunds,

And life is not noble, nor good, nor sacred.

Few would agree the city is that bad, but I, for one, would agree that it is pretty bad.

### ***Pathology in New York***

New York City's pathology is in some ways unusual, but in more ways typical. The speed and congestion of the city beget anger and helplessness. It is too big for the anonymous stranger. The individual is small, helpless, often alone. Congestion makes abuse and insult the city's habitual manner. The occasional chaty confessional of the casual passerby never seems to balance the sharp-tongued abuse of merchants, salesgirls, cab drivers, landlords, librarians, and plain citizens. They are not born with sharp edges; the city hones them to a point. This lethal point is driven with a vengeance into slum communities.

For speechless frustration, transit is typical. Especially if you are poor, you ride the subways. If you are a Puerto Rican, or Negro rural immigrant, or even from the big city, you can spin forever in the city's underworld without a friendly word, shoved into the "D" train when you should be on the "A," stumbling onto an express when you need a local, the IRT when you want the BMT, sailing past your stop because signs are hidden, or you can't crowd off in time. No attendant is there to direct you, and others often misinform you. You might feel like screaming out your frustration on the subway platform (like an hysterical child), but you know that no one would hear you or pay attention.

The city's streets, above and below ground, teem with stray souls whose behavior has plunged far over the precipice of sanity. And no



one notices, inhabitants accept the situation of poverty, and the "creant" of all abnormalities and all varieties of non-conformity. Besides, they too are caught in the same system and are often so consumed with looking out for themselves that they do not notice others. And the poor of the city are usually split by ethnic and racial cleavages, when their strength should lie in unity.

The city (in its panic) neglects the simple amenities of life, and looks the other way when it sees something ugly. A recent brutal slaying of a woman in white, middle-class Queens, witnessed in silence by 37 people, attests to the city's grim indifference. These people did not even care for their own kind, let alone the poor. Affluent residents escape to week-end and summer in the country, but the poor are trapped in the city. The slums are simply amplified extrusions of the city's problems: frustration, congestion, and helplessness taken to the tenth power and mixed with quantities of other raw emotions, plus poverty.

Anger builds, and among youths, sometimes ends in gang warfare. When the fighting gets bad enough or spills over onto outsiders, people are sometimes aroused enough to look into it and wonder what is wrong with the *families* that they permit such conduct. Hence, most attempts at amelioration in the slums seem to derive more from fear than charity. Yet the crimes committed *by* inhabitants of such areas seem dwarfed by the crimes committed *against* them, by all the varieties of sharks or swindlers, and the ruthless social neglect, exploitation, public apathy. The city is a Tantalus, a golden prize held out and withdrawn, arousal without fulfillment, hope without expectation, no room to move and no escape. The poor come, like others, to seek their fortune and be near the bright lights, but they pay a price. They are moths crashing into the flame.

### *Living in Spanish Harlem*

The last two years I have spent in one of New York's giant "pockets of poverty," Spanish Harlem. I went there first to write an article. But I became so wrapped-up in the community that I ended writing a book, *Spanish Harlem: Anatomy of Poverty*.

These were, strangely, two of the best years of my life. Maybe I too am a moth crashing into a flame.

But I learned many things in this pocket of poverty.

I learned that East Harlem is far more interesting and rewarding to live in than middle class Murray Hill where I now live, or Greenwich Village where I used to live. The biggest problem is that there's not enough good comfortable housing there, and I (like all other slum

inhabitants) do not want to live in white and cockroach-infested "old-law tenements." The place I live in now is bad enough.

A corollary of this is that the "privileged" have much to learn about life from association with the "underprivileged." This is not an empty "Brotherhood-Day" statement. Rather than being "culturally disadvantaged," the poor are often "culturally advantaged": delightful, warm, spontaneous, generous. Sometimes I wonder if that isn't why they are poor.

The second corollary is the reverse: the "underprivileged" have a lot to learn from association with the "privileged" — namely, how to beat the system and become privileged.

Too often, however, the affluent go into the slum with a kind of Florence Nightingale attitude, dispensing charity to "these poor people," the way people scatter birdseed to pigeons in the park.

Related to this is the "helper" (teacher, social worker, etc.) who feels so "sorry for these poor people" that he does not treat them as equals. In some strange way he "relaxes standards too much" or applies a "double standard." He does this out of what he regards as "mercy for the poor." In some cases, to change ridiculous standards, as inapplicable to the rich as they are to the poor, makes good sense. In other cases, it is not clear that in the long run this shift in "standards" is always merciful to the poor. More to the point would be establishing standards that are relevant, and experimentation with new methods of achieving those standards.

The second thing I learned is that the poor have helped themselves *most* by "moving around," first, by moving into New York, then by moving out. Central Harlem alone has experienced a 14% population loss in the last ten years, mostly in the 22 to 44 age bracket.

Negroes are improving their lot by moving out and up. This "housing-spread" may continue to pave the road up out of poverty.

In East (or Spanish) Harlem, some agency people want to arrest this movement, and hold on to the upwardly mobile group. They believe that East Harlem can become truly integrated. They have built a large "middle-income cooperative" there, and will continue to build *more*, to attract a white and a middle-class mixture.

Indeed, there seem to be many people in New York and elsewhere who would like to live in truly integrated housing, such as is found in Paris and Stockholm, where the rich and poor live next door to each other and in the same buildings.

East Harlem has already attracted into its middle income housing the most fascinating community of people that I have found anywhere in the city. The churches have also pulled in an extraordinary variety of people, many of them upper-class, who have been associated with

Union Theological Seminary, and who are very much in the "Niebuhr, Norman Thomas" tradition.

I am convinced that if we try hard, we can create vital, attractive and truly integrated communities in some of these old mid-city slum areas.

The third thing I learned is that though some social agencies are trying hard, they need a lot of help. And they need new ideas.

I do not want to criticize the social agencies or the social workers. It is too easy to scapegoat them for society's sins of omission. Still, at least in some cases, Marion Sander's words seem not far off target:

"The day after the bomb fell," she said, "the doctor was out binding up radiation burns. The minister prayed and set up a soup kitchen in the ruined chapel. The policeman herded stray children to the rubble heap where the teacher had improvised a classroom. And the social worker wrote a report. Since two had survived, they held a conference on "Interpersonal Relationships in a Time of Intensified Anxiety States."

Fortunately, the civil rights movement is now doing some of the shouting and table-thumping that others might have been doing all along.

### *Mobilizing the Community*

I learned about community organization in East Harlem; better, about community mobilization. I saw the great need for organizing this relatively unorganized community, and for arousing people to action in behalf of their own interests.

I saw how difficult it is to organize people using the customary methods of the social agencies. I also saw how much easier it is to organize people when you talk to them loud and clear, and when you ask them their opinion and listen to what they have to say.

It is a simple formula. Organized labor learned it long ago, but has not applied it in the community yet. Labor unions built their powerful organizations and gave a voice and real power to the "then" poor through this simple six-step formula:

1. Listen to the grievances people have; listen to their problems and complaints.
2. Decide what are the best issues to press and to organize people around.
3. Use the natural leaders (the men from the shop) to do the organizing, not "white collar professionals" with a university degree in labor organizing.
4. Arouse the people over these issues — "agitate" them if you will — get them to see that their hope lies in organization.

5. Once organized, engage in mass action which will both unify your own group and exert influence on employers.
6. Press ahead on the political front, where the largest victories are to be won.

Using this formula, labor accomplished great feats. It confronted the whole spectrum of industrial and financial power with non-violent resistance, the strike. It brought decent wages, better working conditions, and more security to the poor who joined its ranks.

Some people may look back and say that those things were not very nice — strikes, disobedience, sometimes violence on the picket-line. But few would now deny that organized labor has made an extremely important contribution in bringing democracy into the shop and decent standards to millions of America's impoverished.

This proven formula is only now beginning to be used in *community* organization. It seems to be the only type of organization that *does* work. Witness the civil rights mobilization and agitation, issues which have activated the so-called "apathetic" poor in East Harlem and other places.

I have seen Saul Alinsky's work in Chicago and his Industrial Areas Foundation; I have seen the work of New York's Mobilization for Youth, and Michell Sverdoff's Community Progress in New Haven, Connecticut, and the work of the TULC in Detroit — and I can see that we have much to learn from them.

Social workers in East Harlem have said to me, "What can we do? We don't have enough services, enough people, enough money. We pick up one and ten others fall down." Perhaps we should look at Saul Alinsky. He sends *one* organizer into a community, one man, only one — and, in each case the so-called "apathetic" suddenly emerge from their cocoons, to join a mass movement, to protest the terrible conditions of their lives. Alinsky *CLAIMS* (and I have no real way of knowing if the assertion is true but the *CLAIM* alone is of great interest) — he *claims* that when an organization starts rolling in the community, homicide and suicide decrease, crime decreases, pathology decreases — markedly. The poor learn how to assert themselves and their rights, and they learn how to win political power. Alinsky, I know, has vocal protagonists and antagonists, but I think his claims need looking into.

I do not say that the agitators are the only ones who can do anything in slums; far from it. *Everyone*, I'm sure, can help in different ways, and I think we should besiege the slums with our persons and our services. At the same time we should keep in mind the potential of demonstration, agitation, group action, and organization for self help.



movement, and the youths are doing well. Youth always wants to do something meaningful. As Jane Addams said years ago: "Youth hears constantly of the great social maladjustment, but no way is provided for them to change it, and their uselessness hangs about them heavily."

A great many youths in East Harlem are out of school and out of work. These youths will work in the community to uplift it. The trouble is that like others, they will often work if they think it's *against* something — the world of institutions, the unknown things that hold them down.

I have been impressed with a youthful CORE group now working in East Harlem, though I know others have been much less impressed. It is a bright, lively, integrated group whose first act was to lie down on the Triboro Bridge and prevent the flow of traffic into the suburbs for 20 minutes. The motorists were angry enough to want to throw them off the bridge, and if I had been driving over the bridge I might have been too.

But listen to what these 18 year olds said on that day: "East River CORE is engaging in civil disobedience today to protest the unsafe and overcrowded schools in East Harlem."

"We regret inconveniencing people passing through our neighborhood on their way home to the better sections of the city, but we are both very sorry and very angry about the way that Negro and Puerto Rican children are treated in the richest city in the wealthiest country in the world. We ask commuters to look more closely at the schools in our community because they are so unlike many of the schools in Queens and Long Island."

"A number of our schools, built back in 1883, are potential fire traps. P.S. 80 had a fire last Sunday in a room next to the gymnasium. If it had occurred during the school day and spread to the rest of the building, many children would have died. The debris from this fire has still not been cleaned up."

"Schools built to hold 500 children," their statement continued, "now hold over 1,000. Many have no auditoriums, few toilets, cracked plaster, and over-crowded lunchrooms. When the children eat, they smell the garbage close by."

"We are asking that New York commuters stop for a moment to look at Harlem and the people they leave behind, and that they do something about this problem, that is not only Harlem's, but all America's."

may have learned a lesson in protest from the kids.

Strange how seldom we stop to ask the kids, or let them take over.

I am vastly impressed with how much can be learned if you keep asking people, especially the youth, "What do you think?" "How do you feel?" "What should be done?" They have uncommonly good sense, good ideas, and a great store of unused energy and optimism.

### **Who Leads?**

I have also learned of the need for the poor to "take power," so to speak. In East Harlem, a community that is about 80% Negro and Puerto Rican, the 20% whites do almost all the talking and directing of official activities. If you go to a "community" meeting in East Harlem, a gathering of "professionals" and "agency people," you get the shaky feeling that you must be in the wrong place. With all these white faces, this can't be East Harlem. But it is. There is not a single Negro or Puerto Rican school principal in East Harlem, and in the whole city there are only about half a dozen out of every 1,000 top school administrators.

Almost every "official" in East Harlem is white. The police, the firemen, the teachers, social workers, merchants, ministers — even the politicians — are almost all white. Adam Clayton Powell, after the last census, took over East Harlem, and the Italian who was there moved to another district; but aside from Powell there are few Negro politicians, though 40% of the population is Negro. There are, however, two Puerto Rican assemblymen, so in politics the minorities do better than elsewhere. In the schools and other places, the poor need to take over more of the decision-making. If the poor are to feel anything but alien to these institutions, they must be given or must take position and power in them.

The last thing I learned that I have time to report here is related to the others. It concerns politics and jobs.

These seem to me to be the two top priority items.

Because the New York State Legislature has imposed voter literacy tests — tests required nowhere else outside the south — more than half of East Harlem's voting age population did not vote in the 1960 presidential election, an election that pulled out a big vote in other slums. In cities, like Detroit and Chicago, the poor are better organized for political action, and are not held-down by literacy tests, so that only 35% of the poor failed to vote. But always the non-voters among the



poor are far more numerous than among the prosperous. The vote, as we know, is the citizen's major avenue to power.

While there has been little agitation in East Harlem over jobs, obviously jobs are related to every other issue in the poverty syndrome. "No jobs" or "low-wage jobs" are the major cause of poverty. In turn, they are related to poor education, poor housing, poor health, poor psychological health, poor self image, and a variety of pathologies. My own feeling is that while training is fine, our society is going to have to start producing a lot more decent unskilled jobs with a decent minimum wage, if it is to do much for the city's poor.

The last element missing from the city slum is a *Dream*. We apparently have lost it somewhere, and need to find a new ideology, a new Dream. I believe we will find it, a new creation, not an *old* cliché.

Oscar Wilde said: "A map of the world which does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at . . ."

And on November 18, 1963, John F. Kennedy said: "Robert Frost wrote 50 years ago, 'nothing is true except as a man or men adhere to it — to live for it, to spend themselves on it, to die for it.' We need this spirit even more than money or institutions or agreements."

## PART III/THE STUDENT

### Youth Acts

I learned in East Harlem something about the role youth can play in getting a slum up on its feet. Some of the protest of the former

The kids are eloquent and they are right. Most of East Harlem's schools are in very bad shape; and the middle class agents in the area (teachers, parents, etc.) are

## *"Disadvantaged"—and What Else?*

FRITZ REDL

was born and educated in Vienna, and taught in public schools there for eleven years while continuing post-doctoral training in child analysis at the "Wiener Psychoanalytisches Institut." He came to America in 1936, invited by the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, and served in varied capacities at the Universities of Michigan and Chicago. As Professor of Social Work at Wayne University from 1941-53 he developed and administered his famous projects of group therapy with aggressive children. For the following six years he was Chief of the Child Research Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health at Bethesda, and later was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences Ford Foundation at Stanford, California. He is now Distinguished Professor of Behavioral Sciences at Wayne State University. In addition to his many articles and pamphlets, he is co-author of *Mental Hygiene in Teaching* and *The Aggressive Child* (combining *Children Who Hate* and *Controls From Within*.)

When I began to consider my topic, "disadvantaged — and what else?", I was especially eager to focus on the "what else." But then it became obvious that the "what else" would be so long and involved that there was no hope of covering even part of it in a brief talk. So please forgive me if this proves to be a sequence of odd comments rather than an orderly, well-organized and research-sounding address.

First, a few "irritational statements," purposely overstated a bit, to make you a little uneasy, excited, angry — and interested.

### *Irritational Statement No. 1*

I don't like the term "disadvantaged." I think it has an awful odor — to phrase it politely. However, we are stuck with it, and most other labels smell no sweeter, so at least we ought to remember each time we use it — or its relatives — that we should look twice to be sure we know what we are talking about — or what another means when using the term. For nothing is more tempting than a new label to cover our ignorance or to hide the fact that it may refer to widely differing conditions. "Disadvantaged" means little without something added.



You, in all likelihood, do not have everything you want or need. But does that mean you are "disadvantaged" in every respect? Don't we limit our use to such people as the youngster who is not doing well in a specific learning or character development which we are supposed to support? May not the same "environmental conditions" which make him disadvantaged in these respects actually hold advantages valuable to his later life tasks, even though they may not show right now?

**ILLUSTRATION:**

One year, in a camp for disturbed children, I had reason to be especially grateful to one youngster — let me call him David (his real name) — who was a rather rough customer. When I caught on to some of his special talents, I was green with envy. For, while he wasn't good in school matters — in fact, he couldn't read — he had some skills which it would take a year of intensive work in a seminar for young psychiatrists to approximate. Or to be even more frank, he had some skills which I couldn't match at all, with all the years of training and experience, and just plain age, in my favor. One day I found David rifling through my filing cabinet. Under the letter "C" he had pulled out a bottle of Cognac kept there for purely medicinal purposes, of course, and was about to take a slug from it. I grabbed it away from him and said: "Listen, brother, this isn't coke!" His answer: "Can I help it if I can't read?"

This kid's real skill, though, in spite of his retardedness in matters of schooling, lay in the direction of uncanny diagnostic and even prognostic know-how. This became apparent during one of the episodes one is bound to run into when one gathers a bunch of thieves to run a camp for. For a week, flashlights had been disappearing, and even though our staff was pretty good at sleuthing by that time, we never could find out what happened to them. After a while we caught on to their system. If an older kid swiped a flashlight, he would go over to the younger boys' "village," pick out a kid from among those playing around in front of their cabin, and say: "Listen, little boy, want to play with my flashlight for a few days?" And, of course, the little boy, being quite aware of what he was in for, would say: "O, sure." Since nobody was searching there, the stolen loot would be quite safe, until it could be retrieved from the "temporary loan" arrangement without risk.

Now, luckily, David and his accomplices sooner or later were also bound to make a diagnostic mistake, which is how we caught on to the whole thing.

What bothered me, however, and even more now, was the question, just how do they know which kid to pick so they would be safe? David did not know these younger kids, and the turnover that year was considerable. I had all their case histories, and with all the stuff in them and the tests, I could not have done as well. So I asked him. His answer made me mad, for he said: "O, you just know those things." That is exactly what we do in professional situations when we can't explain something.

So I decided I wouldn't let him get out of it that easy, and took him down to the little boys' village and challenged him, "O. K., show me how." I pointed to a group of kids playing around the cabin. True enough, he pointed at one without much hesitation. I said: "But why this one, why not that one over there?" This made him mad. He said: "But, Fritz, you must be crazy. That one you pointed at would never do. He wouldn't be safe at all!" Now I was really eager to get the details on that diagnosis. And I got it: "Fritz, if I would pick that one, you know what would happen? Of course he will say yes, on account he is scared. Of course he won't blab, on account he knows what would happen to him. But then, one of these days there will be a thunderstorm, and the kids will come home late from a rained out overnight or something. And the counsellor will sit on his bunk to read a story. The kid will feel kind of cozy and good because he likes her. What will happen? He will fiddle around with his flashlight, he will drop it, and then the counsellor will suddenly wonder where it came from, because it wasn't in his laundry check and she will ask him how he got it, and he won't say, but she will know, and I will be in the soup!"

Brother, what a fantastic prediction. How does he know? Not only what the youngster's characteristics are — that I can also find out from his case history, his Rorschach and what have you, and the pile of psychiatric evaluations I have in my green files. How does he know which *character trait will melt under the impact of a specific experience* and, if the resolution not to blab melts, what specific form it will take, namely an "unconscious slip" type of betrayal? Remember, David has not read Freud — I can prove that; he couldn't read.

Now, if that is what he *can* do, then I say: David is disadvantaged all right, in many ways, but this does not mean that everything in his

life has operated to his disadvantage. Unfortunately, he wasn't advantaged enough to be able to make positive use of his unusual skill, except in battle-relevant areas. He was not able to translate into constructive forms his skill of casing the joint and casing the person; in short, his close-to-genius level of diagnostic and prognostic skill. By the way, even if he had been able or willing to do so, there was no market value for this type of psychiatric expertise at his age level and where he lived. However — and this is why I bothered you with this story to begin with — it does raise a point: If we say "disadvantaged" and if we insist that a given "setting" in which a kid operates and grows up is inappropriate, we had better pause for a moment, become more specific, and also ponder just what *potential advantage* it may contain, which, if we only know how to discover and build on, may become an asset rather than a hindrance in a kid's life.

#### *Addition No. 2: Disadvantaged — on what basis?*

The term "disadvantaged" needs a second addition. Here, I am afraid, we sometimes take our own professional frame of reference too much for granted. For instance, if we are sociologists or anthropologists, we are rather sure we know what "disadvantaged" means. Yet, no matter how well based in general research our interpretation of the sociological or anthropological meaning of "disadvantaged" may be, how do we know whether all this has anything to do with the specific issue we confront in a given youngster?

#### ILLUSTRATION:

I remember a kid who has a learning problem. The Visiting Teacher has tried hard to be helpful. The boy is also emotionally disturbed, but in spite of this, the VT in the case has done well as far as the youngster himself is concerned. She has gotten "through" to him all right, and, theoretically there should be no reason why this boy could not be helped.

Yet, the case is hopeless. For this kid is disadvantaged not only for the reasons you suspect after my introduction, but for an additional reason: He has a father who is a blustering fool and a conceited sadist. Now never mind how his father got that way. I am as ready to "understand" that as you are. The fact is, however, this kid is now stuck with his old man, and we are stuck with both. The result is that nobody who tries whatever remedies may seem advisable, can get anywhere. Even if we could find a place where the kid can be treated, the money to take care of costs, etc., when the teacher might try to talk to his father, he

would refuse even to talk with her. For he knows it all, he knows "schools are hostile, and the hell with them, and what do silly people like teachers know to begin with," and so forth. I am sure you know the line. In fact, while mercilessly cruel to his child in the case of misdeeds, he defends him against anybody who might criticize from without.

In short — and this is meant to be the point of this crudely abbreviated story — this child is "disadvantaged," but not only on the basis of an economically, socially, or culturally inappropriate environment. He is disadvantaged on the basis of a *characterological accident in his family: His father is a blustering fool and a conceited sadist.*

Now this variable is highly independent of sociological or sub-cultural milieu. To put it differently, we produce the same type of characterological miscreation in any setting, not just in the so-called "underprivileged" ones. Details and form of parental behavior will vary of course. Meeting the same basic situation, for instance, high in the "upper mobile" class, in a family who has just moved into a fancier neighborhood because that went with the professional profession and the need to live in appropriate high society circles, the same style of father would not consider the school "hostile." Rather, he would be more angry at the kid than at the school, because the kid has embarrassed the family in their social prestige. He would ward off a teacher who might dare to suggest "treatment" with equal anger, but his anger would be based on the hurt dignity implied in such a suggestion. "Who are you, an underpaid employee of the school system, to suggest that a member of our fine family is emotionally sick? And, by the way, if you talk about silly fads and frills like clinics and such in our community, you are probably subversive anyway, and we had better call the board of education about it, for we don't want that kind of talk in our fine community."

What I am trying to convey is this: If we talk about a kid being "disadvantaged" we should remember that the basis on which we make such a statement may transcend the variables usually associated with this term. Even if many items in a particular environmental setting may suggest anything but the term "disadvantaged," other issues, such as characterological properties of important figures in a child's life, or other "accidents" such as a death in the family, may be equally crucial. In short, whenever we use a term like "culturally deprived," let's remember that we have a rather hot terminological potato in our hand and let's not become too complacent, even though at first sight the variables we happen to be able to isolate look logically clean and sociologically respectable.



*Let's watch out for the return of the obsolete!*

Nothing is more dangerous if we suddenly find a "new interest" emerging and being implemented, than to forget what we have learned the hard way. Thus, in the new situation we may make the same mistakes which it took us years to get rid of in the old one. Each time, for instance, that a new science develops, it usually goes this way. It may take us twenty to thirty years to *rediscover* what everybody already knew. Just one illustration may firm up this point:

#### ILLUSTRATION:

When "group therapy" started to become popular and began to be taken seriously even in the more rigorous professional circles, we returned to a state of naiveté we had long abandoned in the field of individual treatment. Namely, we lulled ourselves into the idea that it would be a cheaper and easier shortcut, because the well known and bothersome phenomenon of "resistance" could be ignored. The "group" was naively expected, for a while, to do it all so much easier.

It took a few decades until we realized that the old issue is still with us, that the complexity of "resistance phenomena" can not be forgotten. The forms they take in group leadership are different from the ones in the "therapy room," but we are stuck with meeting them and with finding new ways to do so. There is no return to the obsolete concept of therapy without the complex technology of dealing with "resistance" phenomena.

There are three types of concepts regarding the "disadvantaged child," which I think are definitely obsolete, but which seem to sneak back into practice under the pressure of contemporary fashions:

#### *Obsolete Model Style 1910:*

By this I mean a model which I consider *sociologically naive*. The chronological date, by the way, is rather willful and should not be taken too literally. I am talking about the time when one thought that misbehavior in children is simply the result of moral turpitude or of disease. Never mind the specific styles of the environment, factors of social class and cast, or any of the "subcultural mores" issues of which sociologists and anthropologists have since made us so aware. At that time, for instance, it was hard to convey the idea that some "hyper-aggressive" youngsters need not be "analyzed," because their behavior is not primarily a clinical issue, but has to do with the value standard discrepancy between their neighborhood mores and the middle class

morality of their class room. Now, by the way, this way of thinking is totally gone. I wish sociologists and anthropologists were aware of how completely successful they really have been in puncturing social and cultural naiveté in the healing professions! I do not know a single psychoanalyst, for instance, who would not know all the things which sociologists are so eager to publicize. In fact, sociologists have been so successful that I find many of my younger psychiatry students not even aware that the emphasis they are getting on "socio-economic and sub-cultural data" in their case history writing, was not originally a part of psychiatric lore, but has been introduced into it through infiltration from sociological and anthropological research! By the way, I still find people in sociological and anthropological ranks who seem unaware of the educational success of their sciences, so this should provide a "happy ending" for them. In short, what I am trying to say is this: There seems to me no danger that *obsolete model 1910* is likely to return, for even those who took their time in modernizing don't even remember the old pattern.

#### *Obsolete Model Style 1940:*

By this I refer to a model I consider *clinically naive*. Again, my chronological figure is only crude and not meant too literally. But there was a trend accompanying the blissful ascendancy of anthropology and sociology, to assume that tracing environment and culture involved in disorganization or disease, was all that was needed. To that obsolete model I say two things:

A): Of course, all the factors isolated thusly are important, but that is not always all there is to it. After all is said and looked at from that angle, there remains a *difference between sickness and health*, at least from a certain point on. If people think that just because somebody developed fantastic delusions or a paranoid system of thought, he could become a medicine man in a primitive tribe, that somebody is very much mistaken. Even though it is true that up to a point what in a given society would be considered schizophrenic fantasy might be considered legitimate religious belief or lore in another, this only reaches that far. Beyond that point, even in the same society or culture, some guys would be considered plain screwy and would never make it as medicine men.

B): Even when we come closer to our topic, some of this needs to be remembered. In work with children, for instance, I find we still sometimes try to smuggle in the obsolete concept of the "cleanly sociological delinquent," whose only difference from everybody else is that he absorbed a delinquent value system as a legacy from his environment, instead of a neatly middle class one.



Unfortunately, I haven't yet found such a kid. Maybe that is my fault, but I have a suspicion that this pure case does not exist. For even children in a tough and delinquent neighborhood *live under a double standard*. Those who work with such kids will remember how often you find this neatly demonstrated. Remember the cases where a tough older gang has somebody's younger brother trailing around with them? He certainly is exposed to a lot that doesn't fit his age, but there invariably comes a cutoff point. His older brother will object: "Shut up, you can't say that in front of my little brother; he ain't old enough for that yet." For somewhere along the line, there are rather clear dividing points between what goes for a kid and what goes for an adult. Even the parents, by the way, who in their own lives may be liberal with tough talk or actually train their kids for stealing, don't want them to swipe within the bosom of the family, and won't "take that kind of talk" from them, until they are "old enough" for it.

In short, even children in reasonably clearcut delinquent subcultures are expected to develop guilt-feelings, embarrassments and concerns, producing anxieties not visible on the behavioral surface. Psychiatrically, this often makes for a very complicated diagnostic problem. For all practical purposes, some of our swaggering toughies look just like the real McCoy. Some of them, at closer inspection, and after you shave off some of the tough defense a bit, turn out to have a nice clean neurosis buried under their delinquent skin. Just as nice and value-conflict-conditioned as any we used to make so efficiently in the upper classes in Vienna at the turn of the century. Only — where they live, they can't afford it, so they have to put a heavy layer of the opposite over it for disguise.

I am afraid I discover a certain illusory hope in much of the recent discussion about "disadvantaged youth" that we could return to this oversimplified and seemingly pure sociological model and save ourselves the complications of clinical work and therapeutic implementation.

#### *Obsolete Model Style 1964:*

This one worries me most, for it looks as though it were new, but it is already obsolete even before we flood the market with it. It is, in my opinion, based on a phenomenon which, out of politeness, I am willing to call:

#### *Implementation Naiveté*

It, in turn, appears on two levels:

*Level 1:* We sometimes show a lack of recognition for the specialized knowledge, training, experience, and skill which a given job requires in changing a kid, a group, or a neighborhood. We

usually admit how complex our own sciences are, be they anthropology, sociology, psychiatry, education or what not. But we have a tendency to *consider complex essentials of our neighbor field expendable or even a silly luxury*. For instance: Why should we need trained people: Can't any bum cured by Alcoholics Anonymous, who happens to smell of the same flophouse other people come from, be used as a therapist, with the additional advantage of being "one of them?" Now there is no question about the importance of a certain amount of familiarity with class differences, with the body-odor of different neighborhood styles, etc. Also, there is no question that the ability to translate oneself into somebody else's value and style domain, is essential and has limits beyond which we can not go. There is also no question in my mind that the judicious use of volunteers on all levels could be increased. However, any such increase also requires an *increase in implementation with trained staff, supervisory time, well-screened work situations, and so forth*, in our field as well as in any other. I am afraid I hear from some statements made recently a note of nostalgia for the obsolete idea that an increase in volunteers would "solve the problem" and that our sister discipline's standards can easily be done away with as an urgency compromise. Such a return to this type of obsolete model of services would, in my opinion, have most disastrous results.

*Level 2:* On the second level I mean by "Implementation Naiveté" the *lack of essential conditions for doing a specific job*. Under conditions I include numbers of staff, space arrangements, tools needed, and time available for work and communication among the workers, over and beyond the usual concept of "environmental" factors.

In physical medicine we are more realistic about this. If you want to take an appendix out, there are certain conditions which need to be guaranteed, or else. You can't say: "After all, let's not be fussy. The Charwoman is friendly; let her help with this or that. You can't have everything, can you? And you don't have to wash all that stuff in expensive antiseptics. After all, do you think money grows on trees?" Doctors have enough guts to say, "Listen, that's what it needs. It costs that much to get it; there is no way around. Or else we could not expect the operation to succeed."

Unfortunately, in the tasks I am likely to undertake, I can not count on as much financial realism. If it comes to reforming kids or changing neighborhoods, we frequently are not courageous enough to speak up loudly for what we need. If, for instance, you

set up a classroom for emotionally disturbed children — and I have recently been through this many times — we know by now what is needed, and what a successful design requires for implementation. Yet, I find myself continuously confronted with the suggestion, “Let’s just put some kids together and never mind whether their disturbances click or not.” Children who didn’t fit elsewhere get dumped into the same pot, even though the nature of their problem may be as different as foot disease *versus* scarlet fever. On top of that, I am invariably hit with the argument: “We haven’t enough teachers, and of course a Visiting Teacher is just a naive fad and frill.” The teacher they have doesn’t even have time to go to the john until 3:30, to say nothing of her need to keep records, communicate with other teachers, talk with parents, and so forth. Yet, we have the cheek to call such designs “classrooms for emotionally disturbed children.” I think this is an obsolete model of special services which, unfortunately, even professionals frequently don’t have the guts to yell about. And professionals of “other professions” frequently watch this kind of disaster without raising their voice, for after all, the problem is no skin off their specialization’s nose.

Now, all this is obviously disastrous. If you really want to do something that is effective for the children you call “disadvantaged,” no matter what caste or class or neighborhood they breathe in, you must recognize that obsolete models of whatever sort need to be fought against with more vigor than the disease itself. *Psychological reality is as real and unrelenting as the reality of the gadget world.*

We finally arrive at the topic of the day: “Disadvantaged — and what else,” and I should start talking about three issues:

1. *What else should we know about children to change things and to communicate with them?*
2. *What techniques will we have to develop in order to do the job?*
3. *What designs do we need and which ones do we have to create over and beyond those now known in order to do our job?*

Unfortunately, this is obviously more than I can possibly manage to even list properly in the remaining time. So let me switch, instead, to something different, though related; an issue I would like to get you worked up about in the minutes left. Unfortunately, I have to give it a fancy name, for it is an issue all too frequently swept under the rug, and I must mark it with some kind of headline, or it will get too long to unfold.

I shall call it:

### *The Secondary Characteristics of Primary Action Relevance*

That perked you up. You would have fallen asleep if I hadn’t said something that seems hard to understand. Yet, it really is very simple, but with all its simplicity — or perhaps because of it? — it is one of the most sorely neglected problems I could list.

Let’s assume somebody has a beautifully classic anxiety neurosis as we made them in the upper social crust of Freud’s Vienna. We don’t produce many today. Our kids are much too disobedient to pick a classical symptom. They mix their syndromes from all over the map; hopelessly ignoring our psychiatric textbook prescriptions. However, let’s assume we have found a pure one, say a boy in China. Let’s also assume that this boy somehow gets together with an Expert Psychoanalyst who has been longing in vain for just such an affliction. Let’s assume there are no financial handicaps to prevent doing what is obviously duck soup. We know all about this affliction and how to handle it; all it takes is time and money and we have both. But our neurotic boy talks only Chinese, while the therapist knows only English. See what I mean? The linguistic barrier is obviously entirely irrelevant clinically, yet it is the child’s therapy as much as if he came with an unknown disease!

This example was a bit oversimplified. Let’s move to one somewhat closer to our concern: I have a kid who finally, in tenth grade, gets interested, motivated, and eager to change. He was a no-good delinquent bum before I got hold of him. It took a year to move him to the point where he has stopped hating me, and is ready to give me a chance to become a change agent in his life. In short, he is with me and wants what I want him to grow into. Yet it so happens he can’t read. Even with all my therapeutic conceit, I don’t think whatever I do with him will be enough, unless somebody helps me take that hurdle. He reminds me painfully of a classroom observation I made years ago:

Twelve kids were in a classroom with a nice young girl supposed to bring them up in reading skills. It was the craziest assortment you could think of. Here was one little girl, in the front row, looking like seven but probably nine, with blond braids, and looking like the kind of kid with “prince and princess” type daydreams of the pre-school age. In the row behind her were three really rough and tough customers, about 13 or 14, though one looked like 18. Each time they put their hands in their pockets a pair of dice fell out. You know what I mean.

The teacher had language material “on their reading and comprehension level.” It was the story of the Princess and the Pea. Our blond little girl listened with rapt attention. She obviously was eating it up.



My three lugs at first were wide-eyed with incredulity, and then of course gave up. That anybody should have such a dermatological affliction that one little pea (watch the spelling, by the way, I wasn't so sure they got that right either) buried under 20 eider down mattresses would produce a rash, was more than they could find appealing. Besides, why should they worry about peas and eider down mattresses? Two of them slept on the same couch, one of them a bedwetter. There were only two beds in the whole family to begin with. And besides—if that kid is so sick, why the hell don't she go to a school-nurse to begin with?

The point I am trying to make is that if I can't find well-implemented remedial reading services for the youngster I started this story with, all my therapeutic skill will remain wasted. His reading problem is *not part of the clinical syndrome* for which he came into therapy; but it *may become an unmanageable block, unless the program is implemented by designs appropriate to reading*. A cured delinquent who cannot read could hardly find the gratifications which would induce him to stay on the straight and narrow path that leads to middle-class and job respectability for his adult existence.

One more illustration before I start on my list: Let us assume I have youngsters with anxiety stages, and there are plenty of them, hidden or not hidden. Yet, for some reason, the youngsters I am now considering have no ability at all to talk about any of their problems to a *guy in an office, too far away from the original scene of their lives*. In short, while they have the type of disturbance we know how to treat or counsel in an interview situation, they cannot fit our usual design of interview. Talking about what happened last Friday on next Wednesday at 3 P.M. is totally useless. It makes no sense to them; there are no revivable memory traces of last Friday's experience left. Besides, talking to people who seem like an artifact in their lives is unbearable to them, makes no sense, and they won't have any of it. So, while you can drag them there, you cannot make them "relate."

The fact is that most of our "therapeutic or counselling interview situations" have been designed on a model which was first developed for the psychoanalysis of children with rather special types of neuroses and personality structures. For them it is ideal; it has to be sharply separated from their ordinary life. The therapist's role has to avoid anything that could smack too much of teacher-or-parent roles. He must be free from any need to interfere in behavior beyond a certain unavoidable minimum, so that a clean "transference neurosis" can blossom out into therapeutically usable forms.

It so happens that the kids I am now referring to are different. While the anxiety states for which they need treatment are practically identical, other parts of their personality, especially their so-called "ego" is

allergic to the usual treatment milieu. They need interviewing done in high proximity to the setting in which the symptom bothers them most, in close time-proximity to the event itself, and by people who are perceived by them as part of their usual "life space." This allergy to our usual interview design and the ability to use only Life Space Interview patterns are not part of their disease itself, nor are they likely to be caught in the usual diagnostic work-up procedures. Clinically speaking, they are of *primary* importance. Never mind how well equipped you are to understand or treat anxiety states of such children, you can't get at them unless you can produce the *high-life-space-proximity-of-treatment design*. In short, inaccessibility to a specific mode of therapy in itself, while not part of the disease to be treated, may be of primary relevance when it comes to the question, "Who can be changed when and by what process?"

Now, at last, a few illustrations for the long list of "secondary characteristics in kids who need help, which may become of primary treatment or action relevance."

I: Supercharging otherwise reality-gearred issues with an overdose of symbolic valence.

Yes, you are right, this does sound funny and fancy. However, it is really quite simple. Simple to understand, I mean. Handling it is another chore!

*Level 1: Symbolic Valence in terms of developmental phase-prestige.*

Sometimes, for a kid, the haircut he has, the pants he wears, the language he uses, or the question whether or not he carries a specific gadget, such as knife, cigarette, or whatnot, may assume a valence way beyond anything we would expect, and totally out of line with reality. You try to tell him he can't bring or wear this or that in school, a perfectly reasonable request, which, by the way, he doesn't really question at all. However, just watch the reaction you get. The reason for this overreaction: the issue packs more than we expect; it is *symbolic for something else*. What the kid reacts to is not the issue, but the symbolic valence it has assumed in his own life. Symbolic for what? In this case not even for anything fancy way down deep in the Unconscious. Just for the issue of having got behind on a certain phase of early childhood, and being now engaged in adolescence. Adult behavior has become symbolic of the amount of "emancipation" from infancy a youngster has reached, or the degree to which we seem to deny it. So what started as a harmless demand on the side of an adult,



suddenly seems to have loads of I N I packed into it, because for the kid it has become an issue of finding his emancipation questioned or challenged. "I am not a baby any more; you can't treat me like that," seems to be what he is trying to say.

This issue is especially important to remember for those of us who work in the trenches of daily behavioral warfare with children in classrooms, clubs, groups, institutions — and we had better remember that any issue, no matter how simple it may seem to us, may for a given kid suddenly assume this overdose of symbolic valence.

By the way, this issue seems highly independent of the much quoted issues of socio-economic or subcultural factors. Just *what* it is that kids are so allergic to is certainly co-defined by the social milieu in which they grow. The question, however, *whether* a given kid will pack so much symbolic valence into a given situation, has nothing to do with sociology or anthropology. It is not found only in the so-called "lower-lower disadvantaged" areas; you find it just as much in the so-called upper-upper socio-economic strata. It is a function of childhood history and much else, not of psychosocial locus.

#### Level 2: Symbolic Valence in terms of a social loyalty issue

Sometimes youngsters react to a situation, not in terms of what it really holds, but in terms of what it seems to them to imply regarding *the group they come from*. To illustrate: Anybody may remember kids coming back to an institution after a run-away, or because they have just been brought in by the police. They are miserable, cold, dirty, tired, bedraggled. The first thing they meet is a big-bosomed motherly matron, who is full of love and pity, eager to engulf them in an affectionate embrace, and as a gesture of kindness, offers them a shower or a bath. "Come on, sonny, it will make you feel better." For some of these kids this is about the worst insult you could inflict upon them. Far from even perceiving the good intention behind the offer, they see it as a symbol of hostility to them and their kind. "Of course she wants to scrub us, for she thinks we stink. Of course that bitch makes us wash; she don't like our folks either; she thinks we all stink. The hell with her, I want nothing to do with her any more, ever . . ." In short, what started as a benign gesture, ends up as a symbolic clash between two hostile camps.

By the way, these facts as such are well known. What we have trouble with is recognizing the potential symbolic valence in a given moment of intervention in a child's life. Just remember how

many such confusions on the basis of symbolic valence lead to tension in any class room any hour of the day, and we don't even smell what is going on, despite all the clever research and fancy books we read just before we met the kids.

*Level 3:* A third type of "supercharging reality issues with an overdose of symbolic valence" seems to go in the direction of enormous quantities of *surplus aggression released at even slight degrees of frustration or behavioral intervention on the part of adults*. To illustrate: Camps or institutions frequently consider that depriving a youngster of dessert, or sending him away from the table, to be rather mild forms of punishment, especially where the overall tone of the place is warm and friendly, the kids know they are liked, and their bellies are already stuffed with more sweets than is good for them. Yet, amazingly, even under such favorable conditions, we sometimes find that children react with totally irrational quantities of rage, panic, fury, or revenge. It seems that sometimes even relatively mild punishments or quite reasonable and unavoidable frustrations — such as the request to stop playing and come to lunch — release, in some of them, emotional upsets certainly worthy of a greater cause. Therefore, if you work with children who have some problems and are prone to "supercharge," regardless of background or neighborhood, it is important to learn their *special index of vulnerability to this item*. While irrational in nature, it becomes a forceful issue for those responsible for their upbringing and care.

#### II: The gang under the couch

A second illustration for the point that clinically secondary issues sometimes assume primary importance when it comes to figuring out what to do with kids, is even more peculiar. My title, "the gang under the couch" is, of course, only meant figuratively — and, by the way, I am not really thinking of a "couch" either. However, it may suffice as a caption over an issue too complex to squeeze into short space.

Here is what I have in mind. Sometimes you want to have an "inter-view" with a youngster, either as part of long-range therapy, or in order to talk over with him an issue that came up in his life. So you think there are just the two of you in a room, the kid and you. Sometimes that is all there is to it, of course, but sometimes the physical pair really turns, psychologically speaking, into a very different situation. You have the whole "peer group" sitting in. For instance, your talk with the kid starts off on a friendly note. In a short while you suddenly notice you get an amount of defiance, resistance, hostility, stubbornness, and denial, far beyond anything you had reason to expect. What do

you conclude? Ordinarily, you would assume either of three things messing it up for you:

- a) The kid doesn't like you personally, or is mad at something you said or did.
- b) If you happen to be a psychiatrist, you assume that he is in a phase of "resistance to change."
- c) If you are a sociologist, you are likely to assume that probably your middle class body odor bothered him.

Whatever it may be, and sometimes all three and several more assumptions may be correct, in the cases I am talking about, none fits. What is really going on has little to do with you as a person or with the kid's relationship to you. What is really bothering our youngster is the fear of what *his gang might think if they saw him now*. He may like you and accept what you are trying to point out; but how can he possibly give in to an adult without a battle? He would be considered a potential traitor or fifth columnist in the eyes of his pals. Even if he is ready to "give" eventually, he must at least obey the unspoken "duelling code" that his peer group would expect him to enforce before surrender. The specific content of that "peer group code" of brave behavior in an interview with an adult is, of course, different from group to group, from social or subcultural milieu to milieu, etc. But the phenomenon as such may become an important technical issue in work with kids of any level at all. I have had kids sit in that office at camp, with their stolen loot hanging right out of their pocket, with full awareness that nothing would happen to them if they told me what happened, and even with a perfectly "good" interpersonal relationship and well established "role trust" between them and me. And yet, they would rather die than come through with the real story, without making me jump through the whole gamut of their subgroup's duelling code first. They still would insist, "Honest to God, Fritz, I swear on a stack of Bibles, I wasn't even there. I ain't done nothing." Yet, they knew I knew, and both of us were quite comfortable with the eventual outcome. But how could they go back to their group and live with them — and with themselves — if they had "given in" without first making me fight hard for their surrender?

This one, too, is not a function of social caste and class — only the specific content of a given code may be. It does not hit us only in work with kids from the so-called "disadvantaged areas." I meet it with kids from way up on the social ladder, kids of parents with a lot of dough, powerful and willing enough to fix any ticket for them. Here they sit, in Mr. Psychiatrist's office, basically miserable and in obvious need of help. Yet they would rather die than accept a treat-

ment relationship. They have to maintain, in the eyes of their peer group, the image that "my old man only makes me come, for otherwise he would take my car away from me." It may take you months before you get them out of it. In fact, for practical purposes you might as well have the peer group sit right in that room. It couldn't be much more difficult to handle, and maybe you could get some of the other customers on your side in the meantime. It is important to remember that this type of "resistance" is not what we would usually assume. It is not the kid's resistance to you or to change, but his desperate battle to maintain a group image he cannot afford to lose. It is really a group psychological phenomenon, even if it happens in a room with just the two of you in it.

### III: Resexualization of otherwise sex-detached forms of excitement

Since you know that I am a Freudian, you would expect me to bring sex in somewhere anyway. So why not save you the trouble of trying to find out where I hid it, and pick it up where it counts most in daily warfare with child behavior? This is what I have in mind with this rather complicated sounding title. For practical purposes, and in the ordinary way of speaking, certain forms of "elation" and excitement in kids are really "non-sexual." They are quite "naive;" the kids themselves would be surprised and angry if you tied it up with sex. They just enjoy rolling on the floor, wrestling, tickling each other, playing hide and seek, and packing into tight corners, chasing each other in a tag game with ever-increased wildness quite visible for anybody who looks at it. In ordinary language, they are right; it is quite a "legitimate" enjoyment of physical contact, of bodily excitement, and of all that goes with it. Only, just let it go on a little too long, and you will find that either it gets really closer to open sexual stimulation — where they grab each other now is quite below the usual requirements of a tag game — or, even if any overt sexual behavior is missing, the degree of elated wildness which develops is more comparable to that of people in a state of uncontrollable sexual excitement, than of kids involved in quiet and harmless play. If you ever have to interrupt such a scene, you will know what I mean; it is hard to calm them down, as if they were really in a clearly sex-excited elation. Unfortunately, some kids are especially vulnerable to this switch from normal play into "resexualized" forms of excitement. Worse even, their case histories contain no warning. For they are *not* kids with sex problems at all; it only so happens that the elation and excitement of even harmless activities is likely to resexualize them into getting uncontrollably high. I find that in practical work with youngsters, this is an especially important issue and that educators have a lot of trouble with it. Just because it



is *not* obviously "sexual" in the usual meaning of the term, the adult dislikes interfering in "harmless body contact pleasure," and may let it go beyond the point of easy return to normal. Since many kids who are not sex problems at all, are prone to this type of "re-sexualized states of overexcitement," we are likely to miss the point. Besides, it is not only kids with "poor controls" who are likely to get into that stage. I really am convinced that it is an independent variable. I have seen kids with very poor controls and plenty of obvious sex problems who are unaffected by this type of elation. I have run into kids with excellent controls and no sex problems of the usual type at all, whose drifting into this type of "resexualized elation" constituted an enormous hazard. For the parent, teacher, or child care worker, it is important to recognize this transition of normal and harmless fun into more orgiastic wildness, and to learn how to intervene before it gets too messy. Unfortunately, neither sociologists, nor anthropologists, nor psychiatrists have so far given us the kind of research that would be helpful in this task.

#### IV: Slavery under the impact of the "dare"

This phenomenon as such is well enough known. Under some conditions — details are too long a story for the remaining time — and, of course, especially under some situations with a lot of "group psychological excitement" in them, kids are likely to display a nearly slavish dependence on anybody who "dares" them. And, even more important to remember: once in the grip of the "dare-psychology," even the nicest and otherwise most reasonable and self-controlled kids are likely to do the most stupid, dangerous, silly, or even mean and nasty things. In short, the "dare" situation throws some kids into the same state of disorganization that we otherwise find only in states of drunkenness or mob-psychology. Historically, we know the phenomenon well from the old German Fraternity. If somebody wants a fight, all he has to do is to go up to you and "dare you" in some form or other. From then on, the course of events cannot be changed; you have to pick up the "dare" or you are dishonored forever after, even if your or anybody else's career or life is wrecked. When I came to this country I was naive enough to think I would never again have to witness this type of mental disease. How wrong I was! Our kid-cultures somehow have developed a very similar type of "dare" and "duelling code"; only the form varies from subculture to subculture. By the way, the general idea that this is true only in more or less delinquent circles, is all wrong. In fact, I have found some rather obviously delinquent kind of kids who had developed a high degree of immunity to this dare psychology. They knew how to set it off, but they were by no means helpless when

exposed to it themselves. And yet, probably to all our surprise, I could show you loads of very nice kids with excellent self-control, reasonable, well-intentioned, with good super-egos, and well-identified with the values we cherish, who, the moment somebody "dares" them, are totally helpless *vis à vis* such an event. This, by the way, is one thing we ought to learn more about; for the question whether it is safe for a youngster to go for a ride with a group of kids does not depend only on his own driving skill or on the kids he is with. It depends on his own inner resistance to situations which constitute an open or unspoken "dare." This is a characterological variable, fully in its own right, independent of many other issues, and it is highly unexplored!

Some youngsters, moreover, have developed a special skill in setting off this "dare psychology" in others, and retaining enough sense themselves to remain uninvolved, to vamoose from the scene before it gets too rough, and to leave others to act out to the bitter end, what they have so skillfully engineered. For those of us who have to work with kids in groups, this is a most important "characteristic." I would like to know who is slavishly vulnerable to dares and in which situations, and who has the uncanny skill of creating dare slavery in others without being obvious about it.

It so happens that this "variable" or "characteristic" is obviously not a disease in its own right, and therefore will hardly turn up on the list of psychiatric or other evaluations, nor will most case histories on kids we are supposed to help, have any clear reference to it. Yet, while "secondary" in terms of educational or psychiatric assessment, it certainly becomes of primary relevance for anybody who has to decide what to do or is involved in the daily action scene of life with Junior. In fact, why do you always insist on telling me whether Johnny was or was not born with instruments, or — if you are more sociologically inclined — the income level and status symbols of his neighborhood? True, I may want to know that, too. But if you invite me to teach a class, run a playground or an institution, or plan for community change and prevention, I'd rather have you tell me first about the "dare" index.

*In closing* — and it hurts to leave my list of "characteristics of primary action relevance" so dismally short — I would like to exploit the minute left to me by reminding you of the two most important issues for projects you may plan in work with the "disadvantaged child or youth:"

(1) We must develop more courage in helping people over the "complexity shock" and see to it that we don't get stuck in it ourselves. There are some things which cannot be done cheaper, faster, easier, without skill and trained staff, and appropriate means. Whenever we know this to be so, we had better speak up.

(2) We must increase our sensitivity to what I would like to call "implementational stench." At the risk of being called fools, eggheads, or of being considered "uncooperative" or "starry-eyed," we had better make it known whenever we run into projects, programs, or designs which are obviously miserably implemented — no matter how fine and worthy the basic idea may originally have been. For work situations with children and communities, which are not decently implemented, stink. Period.

## *Deprivation and Alienation: A Compounded Situation*

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We have just completed a study of juvenile delinquency in Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup> Eighty-five per cent of the youth referred to Juvenile Court during the course of a year are Negro, although Negro youngsters represent only about 66 per cent of the total population 10-17 years of age. Nevertheless, our report to the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime stated that no association exists between juvenile delinquency and race that cannot be explained by the unequal experiences of deprivation and alienation of Negro and white children in the nation's capital. Negro children are deprived in that 68 per cent of their parents, as compared with only 18 per cent of the white parents in the District of Columbia, live in neighborhoods that are below average in socio-economic status with more than half of the household having incomes of less than \$4,000. Negro children are alienated in that 76 per cent of the non-white population are restricted to a segregated ghetto-type area in which 90 per cent of the population are non-white according to the 1960 census.

<sup>1</sup>Washington Action for Youth, Washington, D. C.: United Planning Organization Board of Directors on Juvenile Delinquency, 1964, (mimeographed).



### Who Are the Deprived?

We consider a person or a category of persons to be deprived when their financial resources are insufficient to obtain the goods and services considered necessary for a normal standard of living in the local community. Deprivation is a condition of life relative to the local situation. We consider a person or a category of persons to be alienated when they are cut off from the mainstream of a society and the helpful supports of a community. Racial segregation as practiced in the United States for more than a century has been a powerful form of alienation, cutting off Negro youth from the helpful assistance of the society at large. There are other forms of deprivation and alienation, but economic and racial forms are what we shall discuss today.

Our report to the President's Committee indicated that juvenile delinquency and other forms of antisocial behavior are highest in the deprived areas of Washington. The delinquency rate for the total low-income area based on youth referred to Juvenile Court is twice as large as the citywide rate of 29 per 1,000 youth 10-17 years of age. A few neighborhoods of poverty in the center of the city offer their youth a 50-50 chance of obtaining a court record before attaining adulthood.

Our report also stated that if the District of Columbia were interested in doing something about delinquency and antisocial behavior it had to do something about both deprivation and alienation. We contend that any program designed to upgrade the Negro population economically will experience only short-term success and is doomed ultimately unless it also deals with the corresponding problems of segregation and alienation. In short, racial segregation and discrimination breed economic deprivation.

The same statement can be made of our schools. Racially segregated institutions are associated with economically deprived youth. This, of course, is the hooker on which many communities strike out. They are willing to help Negro youth become upwardly mobile so long as they remain in "their place" which is, of course, a contradiction. But the rationalization for discrimination is strange. Even Dr. James B. Conant swung at this bad pitch in his book *Slums and Suburbs*, published in 1961. He counseled "those who are agitating for the deliberate mixing of children to accept *de facto* segregated schools as a consequence of a present housing situation and to work for the improvement of slum schools whether Negro or white."<sup>2</sup> The fact is that most slum schools serve a predominantly Negro population and in general, communities unwilling to desegregate their Negro population have been unwilling to upgrade it economically. We have several decades of empirical

<sup>2</sup>James Bryant Conant, *Slums and Suburbs*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1961, p. 31.

evidence that the doctrine of "separate but equal" does not work. It can not work. The reason for separating the races in the first place is to accord them differential treatment. Anyone who ignores this fact is whistling in the dark.

As Dr. Conant has said, "more money is needed in slum schools."<sup>3</sup> But more money will never be spent in slum schools so long as they are schools reserved for minorities who are unwelcome in the mainstream of community life. Consider the programs designed to upgrade slum schools throughout the nation; they are largely supported by foundation funds that originate outside the community. While some localities have provided matching funds, by and large there is an absence of large-scale commitment to expending a disproportionate amount of the school budget in slum schools. I do not expect this situation to change for the better so long as slum schools are part of the overall community pattern of racial segregation, *de facto* or deliberate.

You may detect from these initial remarks that this discussion will deal with problems of deprivation and alienation not so much as they are confronted by the teacher in the classroom but as they are fostered by the community at large. The major thesis of this discussion is that deprivation is a function of alienation. You cannot solve the former without solving the latter.

### Schools In Washington, D. C.

Our Washington experience is a prototype of what may be experienced in many big cities of the nation. The best high school in the community is in a predominantly white neighborhood; the poorest high school in the community is in a predominantly Negro neighborhood.

Washington, D.C. schools operate on a track system in which children within a specific grade are grouped according to their ability. The tracks range from basic, general, and college preparatory, to honors. Yet one senior high school in the predominantly Negro slum section of that city had no honors track. What happens to the bright students in that school who deserve advanced study?

In another school district in the predominantly Negro slum section of the city, one-third of the grade-school students attend elementary schools erected before 1900, as compared with only one-sixth of the citywide enrollment at this level in the District of Columbia. Also, 16 per cent of the elementary children attend school on a part-time schedule because of over-crowding, as compared with only three per cent of the citywide elementary school population. In this same predominantly Negro slum section, 26 per cent of the elementary school

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

children are in classes of 36 or more children, as compared with 18 per cent of the elementary school children in the citywide population.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that in some localities the conscience of the community has been pricked by the current civil rights revolution. A few new schools have been built in Negro neighborhoods. These one or two schools have not upset the pattern. I would admonish you to keep your eye on the pattern. It is also true that selected schools in predominantly Negro neighborhoods have been singled out for "higher horizons" programs. This is a laudable beginning, if it is clearly understood as a beginning. Until higher horizons schools are the rule rather than the exception in slum sections of the city, they still will not have transformed the pattern of a poor quality of education in slum schools.

In his book, *The Affluent Society*, Dr. John Galbraith states that "we [ought to] invest more than proportionately in the children of the poor community. It is there that high-quality schools . . . are most needed to compensate for the very low investment which families are able to make in their offspring . . ."<sup>5</sup>

We ought to do this. But are we likely to do so when it is recognized that many of the poor are Negro and that for several years our institutions have deliberately separated Negroes and other minorities from the mainstream of community life so that they could be treated differently?

### *Can Neighborhood Schools Succeed?*

In 1901, Dr. Conant publicly endorsed the statement of a city superintendent of schools who insisted that "he was in the education business and should not become involved in attempts to correct the consequences of voluntary segregated housing."<sup>6</sup> Viewed historically, one hardly could call racially segregated housing in the United States voluntary. But that is another issue. The main point of this school superintendent is that he is in the business of overcoming deprivation, not alienation, as if deprivation because of race could be solved within the framework of existing racial alienation.

At one point Dr. Conant believed this could be done, though now he has some doubts. In 1961, his published position was that *de facto* segregation should be accepted as a consequence of the present housing situation and that groups agitating for the deliberate mixing of schools could spend their energies best working for the improvement of slum schools, whether Negro or white. In February 1961, in a Chicago news conference, Dr. Conant altered his views and allegedly said, according

to the Associated Press, "I was clearly wrong when I suggested several years ago that busing high school youngsters around a big city was impractical." He allegedly further said that big cities should strive to have as many racially and economically mixed high schools as possible and that the comprehensive high school should become truly comprehensive.<sup>7</sup>

Although the statement in *Slums and Suburbs* has probably been used by some communities as the basis for attempting to do something about deprivation without altering community patterns of segregation and alienation, even then, back in 1961, Dr. Conant approached the subject with ambivalence. In that same book, he observed that for "nearly a hundred years our ancestors — North and South, East and West — accepted, almost without protest, the transformation of the status of the Negro from that of a slave into that of a member of a lower, quite separate caste." And then he admits that "we now recognize so plainly, but so belatedly, a caste system finds its clearest manifestation in an educational system."<sup>8</sup> Persons unprepared to do something about the schools and racial segregation ignore this section of Dr. Conant's book. But we ignore it today at our own peril. This is what the civil rights revolution is all about. It is concerned with the mainstream of American society, and the abrogation of a semi-caste system. This is why we call deprivation and alienation a compounded situation. To eliminate deprivation, we must eliminate alienation.

How do we go about eliminating the compounded problems of deprivation and alienation? First, we must begin to identify the problem as it is and do away with a lot of camouflaging verbiage.

The reason that Negro children were one to two years behind white children in some subjects when the Washington, D. C. schools desegregated in 1954 is because Negro children for many years had received the short end of the deal. For years, Negro youngsters in that community and in other communities have been segregated, discriminated against, and herded into a separate caste-like status. As Dr. Conant points out, "a caste system finds its clearest manifestation in an educational system."<sup>9</sup>

### *Jobs and Attitudes*

I am reminded of a young social scientist in Washington who came to us for financial assistance for his project designed to teach Negro youth good work attitudes so that they could find jobs. Here was a purveyor of a project who knew but tried to ignore the fact that the

<sup>4</sup>Washington Action for Youth, *op. cit.* p. 19.

<sup>5</sup>John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*, New York: Mentor Books, 1958, pp. 256-258.

<sup>6</sup>James Bryant Conant, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>Associated Press, news story, February 11, 1964.

<sup>8</sup>James Bryant Conant, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*



unemployment rate is twice as high among Negro males as it is among white males because, on the one hand, Negroes have less opportunity than whites to learn marketable skills, and on the other hand, white employers are inclined to hire white workers first. It seemed to us that the primary problem was not to expend our energy developing good work attitudes but to redouble our efforts to provide a meaningful education for these youth, providing them with marketable skills, and to eliminate discrimination against them. The opportunity to earn money is usually a good antidote for poor work attitudes.

As a matter of fact, we proved this during the summer of 1963. Washington Action for Youth, in cooperation with the D. C. Public Schools, the D. C. Recreation Department, the U. S. Employment Service, and the Washington Urban League, sponsored a summer job program for deprived youth. Jobs were obtained in government and in private business for approximately 1,100 youth 16-18 years of age. Most youth earned \$1.25 per hour for a period of eight weeks with wages being paid by the employing organizations. Seventy-two per cent of the youth lived in poor neighborhoods. Two-thirds came from families in which the head was a manual worker. Eighty per cent had not worked previously. About six per cent had parents currently receiving public welfare. Ten to 15 per cent had court records. These were deprived youth who had experienced limited opportunity in the past. In general, they turned in high-level performances when the opportunity to work was provided.

At the close of the summer, employers were requested to evaluate the performance of each youth and to indicate whether he would hire the youth again. Eighty-seven per cent of the youth achieved job performance ratings of average to excellent and employers were sufficiently satisfied to state that they would rehire three out of every four youth. Nearly all of the youth were Negro.

So the phrases "poor motivation" and "poor attitude" are but camouflaging verbiage that cover up the poor effort of the adult affluent society to reach out to deprived youth and to provide opportunities for them in the mainstream of society. When this is done in good faith, our experience is that these youngsters respond well.

Low aspiration is another camouflaging phrase that covers up the fact that in our society all are encouraged to succeed but some are denied the opportunity. We know that low-income Negro families are acquainted with the good life and want it for their children. In the summer of 1963, we surveyed a randomly selected sample of 1,000 households in a deprived and predominantly Negro neighborhood in Washington. Respondents were asked: "What do you hope your child will do when he grows up?" About half replied that job preference is

for the child to decide. Of the remaining number who had specific occupational preferences, 90 per cent wanted their child to be a professional worker such as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, minister, teacher, nurse, or social worker. Moreover, these low-income, unskilled or unemployed workers in our sample were aware of the educational requirements for professional work. Two-thirds thought their children would need a college education. These families have dreamed no small dreams. Their aspirations are high. But their means for fulfilling these aspirations are few. Their financial resources are small. Their experience of discrimination is great. In summary, the opportunity system is blocked. Parenthetically, probably the best example of camouflage at the national level is the reasoning that prevailed in the United States for so many years prior to 1960 that a person of Catholic religious faith could not adequately perform his duties as president of the United States because he would be subject to political control from the Pope in Rome. We now know in 1964 that this reasoning was but rationalization of personal prejudice.

### *Shifting the Onus*

We tend to attribute to others the problems that are our own. Thus, youth who are pushed out of school because schools are not flexible enough and sufficiently creative to accommodate their special needs are labelled "dropouts." This label places the onus on the youth and not on the school. Poor, fearful, lower-class, Negro families that are rejected by community social service agencies are classified as "unco-operative clients" who do not want to be helped. This label places the responsibility on the family and not on the agency. These and other techniques we have used to rationalize the inadequacies of an affluent society that cares but does not care enough for the poor, oppressed, and the afflicted. The time is at hand when we must call a spade a spade. Deprivation is closely associated with discrimination. We cannot eliminate one and keep the other.

After facing up to the problem as it actually is, the next task is to devise an appropriate methodology for solving it. In general, two alternatives lie before us — one, change the individual, and the other, change the system. Attempts to change the individual are easier because a person is malleable, vulnerable, and defenseless. Attempts to change the system are more difficult because institutions are rigid and time-honored. But change the institutional system we must, if school people are to be more than a band-aid brigade.

Helping deprived youth is necessary and essential. However, these efforts must be viewed in proper perspective — acts of rehabilitation. Changing the system that generates segregation, alienation, and depri-

vation is an act of prevention. While tackling the backlog of past misdeeds requires much of our time and may appear to be overwhelming, we must at the same time assign part of our energy to preventive activities if the same problems we are working so hard to overcome today are not to be visited upon future generations.

The deprivation of the present was contributed to by the social system of the past. Dr. Conant recognized this when he said that "public schools for Negroes and whites together might have softened the caste lines," had these been established long ago when slavery had just vanished.<sup>10</sup>

Of crime control, Dr. Leslie Wilkins of Great Britain has reminded us of the limitation of our approach. Like other community efforts, those designed to suppress crime have focused largely on individuals. As Dr. Wilkins points out in the book *Society Problems and Methods of Study*, it is easy to say of the criminal "He did it — deal with him." Dr. Wilkins points out that "crime has *not* been considered as a failure of social controls but has been simplified to the wrong doing of single persons or gangs." "It should be clear," he concludes, "that dealing with him has not solved the problem of crime and seems unlikely to do so. . . ." He points out that there are social as well as personal control mechanisms, and . . . "to operate on only half of the problem (that is, the personal component) may not solve even half of it, let alone the whole."<sup>11</sup>

The same may be said of problems of deprivation in the school. To focus only on the deprived child without considering also the social system which alienates him and contributes to his deprivation may not solve even half of the problem and certainly not the whole.

### Deploy Students

It seems to me that one of the major system changes the school must make if it desires to overcome deprivation due to alienating racial segregation is to renounce commitment to the concept of the neighborhood school. With reference to elementary schools, I am uncertain as to the importance of the neighborhood school. But at the secondary level, the concept of a neighborhood school contributes to segregation; and on this basis, it cannot be justified.

No one argued about the virtues of the neighborhood high school in Dallas, Texas nearly 25 years ago when I attended Lincoln High School for Negroes in that city. Although my family lived in the western sector of Dallas, in a neighborhood called Oak Cliff, my brothers and sister and all of our playmates traveled by bus several miles to a southern

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup>Leslie T. Wilkins, "Criminology: An Operational Research Approach," in A. T. Welford, Michael Argyle, D. V. Glass, J. N. Morris (eds.), *Society Problems and Methods of Study*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd. (no date), p. 329.

sector of Dallas to attend high school; and we paid our own bus fare. The only other high school for Negroes was in the northern sector. This was during the days of segregation. Then, the neighborhood school was not exalted.

There were, of course, high schools in the western sector of the city where I lived. One might call these neighborhood schools. But enrollment in these schools was limited to white children. The concept of the neighborhood high school, therefore, was not relevant in the city of my youth. Had the little Willie boys and girl attended the neighborhood high school in Dallas in the 1930's, 1940's, and early 1950's there would have been unmistakable racial integration. As the Negro population in urban areas has increased during the past quarter of the century and as this increase in population has been limited to ghetto-like neighborhoods in the center of the city, the concept of the neighborhood school has assumed greater relevance in education. One suspects that the concept of the neighborhood school has been assuming increasing importance since the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 which ruled illegal officially segregated public schools.

I have still another reason for suspecting the concept of the neighborhood school is not as great as it is said to be. It seems the concept of the neighborhood school is most rigidly adhered to in lower class and in lower middle class neighborhoods, but is more flexible and relaxed for residents of the affluent neighborhoods. In Washington, D. C., for example, one of the better elementary schools is the Amidon school in southwest Washington. The superintendent of the city school system has a special interest in that school and its curriculum. In fact, he has written a book about the beneficial effects of its curriculum and the method of teaching that goes on there. The principal of the school has a doctor's degree and some of the finest teachers in Washington are employed at the Amidon School. Amidon is an open school. Children attend it from all over the city. By taxi, late model car, and other means of transportation, well-dressed children from all over the city descend each day on Amidon. For these more affluent children it would appear that the quality of education they receive is considered to be more important by their parents than the geographic location of the school.

Even another example is the boarding school. Some of the presidents of this country graduated from these schools. Boarding schools certainly are not neighborhood schools. Yet, they turn out persons of good character and sound mind. But boarding schools are for the affluent. Could it be that neighborhood schools are recommended for the alienated and poor? The concept of the neighborhood school should remain an open issue in public education. It is in need of more study and



analysis, particularly from the point of view of its association, if any, with segregation, alienation, and deprivation.

### *Deploy Staff*

Another kind of change in the current system of schools and education could be in the deployment of personnel. The racial composition of the teaching staff in many big city schools tends to reflect the racial composition of the neighborhoods in which these schools are located. In Washington, D. C., for example, there are high school principals who are Negro; but none are principals of schools in predominantly white neighborhoods. Moreover, the high schools in predominantly Negro neighborhoods have predominantly Negro faculties and the high schools in predominantly white neighborhoods have predominantly white faculties. The argument is frequently given that teachers prefer to teach in schools that are near their homes. This reasoning suggests that one of the primary variables in education is the residential location of the instructor. I beg to differ with this reasoning. No reliable study has found any correlation between the teaching talents of an instructor and his residential address. Furthermore, a diversified teaching staff is a distinct educational experience for the student. Every school within the city could have an integrated teaching staff of white and Negro teachers. This is within the power of most school administrations; and they should integrate teaching staffs with all deliberate speed. What better way to teach children that Negro and white persons should live together as brothers and sisters than to show them daily that Negro and white persons work together as teaching colleagues.

These and other changes in the school as a system we must make to overcome the festering problem of deprivation compounded by alienating segregation. Changes in the behavior of an individual may or may not affect the institutional systems of a community. But changes in the institutional system usually produces changes in individual behavior. This kind of change tends to be more enduring because it is sanctioned and supported. The time has come not only to redeem the individual who has fallen but to modify the system that contributed to his downfall.

Teachers and administrators are not expected to remake the world. But they can certainly influence the direction in which it is moving by demonstrating what is attainable within the institution in which they work.<sup>12</sup> If a caste system finds its clearest manifestation in an educational system, then the schools are a good place to start in eliminating racial segregation, alienation, and deprivation.

<sup>12</sup>Charles V. Willie, "Anti-Social Behavior Among Disadvantaged Youth: Some Observations on Prevention for Teachers," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXXIII (Spring, 1964), pp. 180-181.

## *Teachers of the Poor: A Five Point Plan\**

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has been especially renowned for his book *The Culturally Deprived Child*, which was selected by the American Library Association as one of the fifty best books of 1962. He has been Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Bard College, was Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University, and consultant with Mobilization for Youth of New York City. In the summer of 1964 he joined the staff in the Department of Psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

### **Introduction**

There are numerous paths to improved education of the educationally deprived, culturally different child: the curriculum, parent involvement, school administration, etc. I believe the teacher and his approach stand at a central point; moreover, in the present hopeful atmosphere, the teacher is more open to change than ever before. But it would be naive, in developing a much needed strategy of change, to suppose that teacher change can occur independent of other relevant variables, particularly administration.<sup>1</sup> Thus while I will stress the teacher, whose importance has been somewhat under-emphasized in the current wave of concern centering more on the child and the curriculum, I recognize that a full strategy, ordering all relevant variables, is badly needed.

The following is a five-fold plan for the training of both pre-service and in-service teachers of urban disadvantaged youngsters:

First, building teacher respect for disadvantaged children and their families. This involves attitude change and a proposed method for producing it.

\*The proposed outline is intended for teachers of disadvantaged children in integrated, multi-classed schools and classrooms. While the approaches suggested may be especially suited for low-income children, they should also be valuable for middle-class white youngsters in terms of broadening their styles of learning and general outlook.

<sup>1</sup>It is striking that significant teacher improvement in morale and performance appears to have taken place in the Banneker District in St. Louis where Assistant Superintendent Samuel Shepard, who appears elsewhere in this conference, has introduced marked administrative modifications *vis a vis* the teaching staff.



Second, *needed* teacher experiences with the disadvantaged.

Third, *some general* do's and don't's in teaching the urban poor.

The fourth and fifth parts are the body of the presentation. The fourth focuses on teaching technology appropriate for low-income youngsters. The fifth suggests a variety of effective teacher styles and how they may be developed through integrating other parts of the plan with the idiosyncratic potential of each teacher. It is concerned with the *art of teaching* and how this art can actually be developed and organized.

The final section suggests ways in which this plan might be organized for maximum effectiveness via special teacher institutes.

#### *Attitude Change Through Interest*

Many people stress the importance of respecting disadvantaged children as the key to their education. But the secret of respect for someone is to know his positives, his strengths. Unfortunately, too many who talk of respecting these youngsters really see nothing to respect; their words are but empty phrases. Hence, it is crucial for teachers to know such positives in the culture, behavior, and style of the disadvantaged as the following: the cooperativeness and mutual aid that mark the extended family; the avoidance of the strain accompanying competitiveness and individualism; the egalitarianism, informality, and humor; the freedom from self-blame and parental over-protection; the children's enjoyment of each other's company and lessened sibling rivalry; the security found in an extended family, and a traditional outlook; the enjoyment of music, games, sports, and cards; the ability to express anger; the freedom from being word-bound; and finally, the physical style involved in learning.

These positives must be spelled out in detail, lest they become vague, romantic, sentimental and demagogic. We need clear vision regarding the positives in people who cope with a difficult environment, who can express their anger toward the school, and who are disturbed at being discriminated against.

The point is that you cannot have respect in a general way. To have genuine respect, you must know the culture and its positives, you must appreciate how these people cope with their environment, and how in coping with it they have built their culture.

However, it is not enough to build respect and knowledge; teacher attitudes must also be changed. This is not as difficult as may be imagined. The most important element is to *interest* the teacher in disadvantaged people and their culture.

Generally, school personnel have not been especially interested in the makeup of these youngsters. The poor, for the most part, are seen

as an undifferentiated, drab mass. It may be fruitful to arouse interest by introducing controversy and ferment about the poor and their psychology. Surprisingly, providing teachers with sociological analyses of disadvantaged groups, while valuable, is not sufficient to develop deep interest and excitement. Oscar Lewis' literary anthropology is more useful, but is still not enough. The time has come for teacher preparation to include the novels, films, art, dance, and music of low income groups, particularly Negro and Spanish. Discussions around books like Warren Miller's *The Cool World*, and the movie made from it are more helpful and stimulating than any anthropological text. Contrasts and issues can be stimulated by books and movies about the disadvantaged elsewhere, such as the British "The Sporting Life," and "Saturday Night, Sunday Morning." Such films and literature offer prospective teachers a different perspective and a closer feeling "inside" for these cultures. Valuable, too, is the study of Negro history and Negro contributions in science, art, and engineering.<sup>2</sup> Discussion of "hip" language may help overcome the stereotype of the non-verbal, inarticulate poor! A look through *Hipponary* by Elliot Horne is especially valuable in creating a feeling for the language of certain disadvantaged groups. It reveals their wonderful ability to verbalize, and destroys the absurd illusion that these people lack verbal ability. They have a highly imaginative language, though they are limited in its formal structure — and the school should certainly work on this need. The first area in the proposed program then, is to build teacher respect for these people by developing interest and excitement concerning their psychology and culture.

#### *Prepared Exposure*

The second area considers appropriate "laboratory" experiences for teachers. Several programs are emerging in this area; one is the Hunter College pre-service program described in *The Culturally Deprived Child*;<sup>3</sup> another is the Mobilization For Youth in-service program in New York City. Such programs stress visiting the homes and neighborhoods of the poor. Many people think that this *exposure* will prove positive in and of itself. Actually simple exposure may actually reinforce existing stereotypes. Teachers, like everyone else, see selectively what they want and expect to see. Consequently, what is needed is a carefully directed, prepared exposure showing *what* to look at and *how* to look at the culture. Instead of merely a broken home, they see an extended female-based family which may be highly organized, although in ways very different from the traditional nuclear family. They learn

<sup>2</sup>See the magazine *Negro Heritage*, P. O. Box 8153, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>3</sup>*The Culturally Deprived Child*, Frank Riessman, Harper 1962, pp. 118-119.

to see how functions are delegated and organized, how child rearing is handled, how cooking is assigned, how members of the family care for the house, how some go to work, and how responsibility is divided.

Teachers can learn not to confuse the normal with the pathological. The normal female-based family is not pathological. But pathology does occur in some families. The difference may be clarified by a look at the middle class family. In some middle class strata, child rearing includes parental overprotection, and overindulgence. This is the norm, just as less intensive loving is normative in lower socio-economic groups. But neither pattern by itself is abnormal, even though pathologies in both classes may well be related to the norm, reflecting it in an extreme form, or expressing the constitutional reactions of particular children.

What teachers need is an understanding of the basic culture (the norm), rather than an emphasis on pathology. They should not focus on the environment as such (the crowdedness, the lack of privacy, the lack of economic security), but upon how these people struggle with their environment, how they have thereby forged a culture, and how this culture can be utilized in the school. It is clear then that we cannot simply call for "tours" and home visits. Teachers must be carefully prepared to look beyond the environment and the surface behavior in comprehending the meaning of the life and behavior of the poor.

### Some General Do's and Don'ts

The third area briefly considers some do's and don'ts in teaching educationally deprived children.

Consistency, structure, and order are fundamental. *Informality and authority are not seen as contradictions; and the poor like both.*

Extrinsic rewards and punishments are understood, but brutality is strongly rejected. The teacher should be straightforward, direct, and should clearly define what is to be done.

*Values related to order, tardiness, or aggression should be strictly oriented toward their usefulness in learning.* ("We can't conduct a class if children fight, come late, walk around, etc. This does not mean that fighting is bad.")

Goldberg states:

"The successful teacher meets the disadvantaged child on equal terms, as person to person, individual to individual. But while he accepts, he doesn't condone. He sets clearly defined limits for his pupils and will brook few transgressions. He is aware that, unlike middle class children, they rarely respond to exhortations intended to control behavior through invoking feelings of guilt and shame. He, therefore, sets the rules, fixes the boundaries, establishes the routines with a minimum of discussion. Here he is impersonal, undeviating, strict, but never punitive. Within these boundaries the successful

teacher is business-like and orderly, knowing that he is there to do a job. But he is also warm and outgoing, adapting his behavior to the individual pupils in his class. He shows his respect and liking for his pupils and makes known his belief in their latent abilities."<sup>4</sup>

Different stages of the teaching process should also be considered. There are two crucial stages: first, achieving contact, and second, developing educational power. In the contact stage comes the special "breaking through" to the child, winning his attention, etc. While this problem is sometimes exaggerated, it is a definite issue in preparing teachers who must develop effective techniques. Unfortunately, a good many teachers who succeed at the contact stage (maintaining orderly, attentive classes) are unable to move on to the next stage and develop educational power. They have done well to achieve the contact stage, of course, but to stop short of the next and most crucial stage is indeed unfortunate.<sup>5</sup>

### Appropriate Teaching Technology

Before turning to a detailed discussion of two specific technologies, let me list a number of approaches that may have special value for low income children:

1. The "organics" approach of Sylvia Ashton Warner (*The Teacher*) should be especially valuable in utilizing the interests and strengths of the youngsters, and should guard against their being "acted upon." (The latter is the current trend in many programs designed for the disadvantaged, who are supposedly "deficit" ridden).
2. The Montessori System which envisions a 35 to 1 ratio of children to teacher may provide valuable leads. The stress on sensory materials and on order in this approach should be particularly congenial to low income youngsters.<sup>6</sup> (Dr. Ronald Kregler, a neuro-psychiatrist at UCLA, is experimenting with a Montessori nursery program for disadvantaged children).
3. Various game techniques may be valuable: "In the Manner of the Adverb," Robbins' "Auditory Set" Game,<sup>7</sup> etc.
4. Sencsch's techniques for teaching economics to first and second graders, seem promising.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Miriam Goldberg "Adapting Teacher Style to Pupil Differences," paper delivered at Teacher's College Conference on Disadvantaged Children, July 1963, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>For a fuller discussion of these stages see Frank Riessman, *The Culturally Deprived Child*, Harper 1962, pp. 94-95.

<sup>6</sup>See Marten Mayer, "Schools, Slums, and Montessori," *Commentary*, July, 1964. Vol. 37, No. 6, pp. 33-39.

<sup>7</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Riessman pp. 84-85.

<sup>8</sup>Lawrence Sencsch, "The Organic Curriculum: A New Experiment in Economic Education," *Purdue University School of Industrial Management Reprint Series* no. 22 (Lafayette, Indiana).



5. *Scope*, the new magazine published by *Scholastic Magazine* is particularly attuned for teaching the disadvantaged.

I shall now discuss first role playing, and then the use of "hip" language.

### *The Special Significance of Role Playing<sup>9</sup>*

Role-playing<sup>10</sup> techniques have long been popular with blue collar workers in labor unions and industry. My own experience at Mobilization For Youth and various community organizations further indicates an exceptionally positive response to role-play technology by low-income people. While more systematic research is needed regarding these observations, it may be useful to present a rationale for the possible special value of this technique in work with lower socio-economic groups.

This technology appears very congenial with the low-income person's style: physical (action oriented, doing rather than only talking); down to earth, concrete, problem directed; externally oriented rather than introspective; group centered; game-like rather than test oriented; easy, informal in tempo.

*The Style of the Poor: Do vs. Talk.* Miller and Swanson,<sup>11</sup> on the basis of investigations, concluded that an outstanding characteristic of the low-income person's style is an emphasis on the physical, and especially, the motoric (the large muscles involved in voluntary action).

It is not simply that the poor *are* physical; that their labor is characterized by working with things; that their child rearing typically utilizes physical punishment; that their religious expression more often includes physical manifestations of emotion such as hand clapping; that when they become mentally ill they appear more likely to develop motoric symptoms such as conversion hysteria and catatonia (disorders involving malfunctions of the voluntary muscles); that they are strongly interested in sports; that they are especially responsive to extra-verbal forms of communication such as gestures.<sup>12</sup> The significant factor from

<sup>9</sup>The following discussion of role playing is taken from "Role Playing and the Poor" by Frank Riessman and Jean Goldfarb, *Group Psychotherapy*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1964.

<sup>10</sup>Role-playing is the flexible acting out (doing) of various types of problems in a permissive group atmosphere, e.g., a caseworker interviewing a withdrawn client, a person being interviewed by a housing project manager in a low-income housing project. As few as two people can role-play (e.g., therapist and client in an office), but most role-playing is usually done in groups where two people act out a situation and the group discusses it. Since it is free of the tensions of an actual problem situation, role-playing stimulates the trying out of new alternatives and solutions in life-like situations without the consequences which in real life may be painful or dangerous. Role-playing thus increases the participant's role flexibility in an atmosphere where he can safely take a chance with different kinds of behavior.

<sup>11</sup>Miller, Daniel and Swanson, Guy. *Inner Conflict and Defense*. New York: Henry Holt, 1960, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup>For a discussion of many of these items see Miller and Swanson, *op. cit.*

the point of view of style is that low-income people tend to *work out mental problems best when they can do things physically*. This is their habit or style of work, and it appears when they work on academic problems, personal problems or whatever.

Role-playing appears admirably suited to this physical, action-centered, motoric style. The process itself requires a wholistic *doing* or acting out of situations, not merely talking about them. This is a mode of problem solving that low income males, and young males in particular, find attractive. They frequently have a strong dislike for "talk," especially talk that is isolated from experience; they want "action" and *prefer talk that is related to action*. They also like vivid (e.g. hip slang), down-to-earth, situationally rooted talk; and this too is more likely to emerge in the role play format. Role-playing is much more lively, physical, and active than the typical interview.

There are numerous other dimensions of role-playing which are congruent with various aspects of the low-income person's style.

— Low-income groups typically do not like the traditional test format, and this limits diagnostic work with them. The requirements of their style seem to be met better by game-like atmospheres and situational measures, both of which are found more readily in role-playing technology.<sup>13</sup>

— Low-income people are generally *less* introspective, less introverted, and less concerned with self. They respond more to the external, to the outside, to action. They are more likely to see the causes of their problems in external forces; they project more and tend to externalize their guilt.<sup>14</sup> Kohn notes that their child rearing patterns center on conformity to external prescriptions — "in contrast to the self-direction focus of the middle-class."<sup>15</sup> He relates this, in part, to the fact that "working-class" occupations require that one follow explicit rules set down by an authority, while middle-class positions are more subject to self-direction.<sup>16</sup>

— While the styles of the poor probably includes a strong emphasis on informality, humor and warmth, the disadvantaged also like a content that is structured, definite and specific. It is often assumed that role-playing is highly unstructured, open and free. In part, this is true, particularly in the early phase of setting the problem and mood. But in the middle and later phases (especially the *role-training stage*),

<sup>13</sup>Becker, Jerome, et. al. "Situational Testing of Social Psychological Variables in Personality," *Mental Health of the Poor*, by Frank Riessman, Cohen, J., and Pearl, A. Free Press, In Press.

<sup>14</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Miller and Swanson, p. 396.

<sup>15</sup>Kohn, Melvin L. "Social Class and Parent-Child Relationships: An Interpretation," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1963, Vol. 68, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

where the effort is made to teach very specific behaviors, role-playing can be highly structured, reviewing in minute detail the various operations to be learned (such as how to run a meeting, organize a conference, talk to a housing manager). Educationally disadvantaged people appear to prefer a mood or feeling tone that is informal and easy, but a *content* that is more structured and task centered. Role-playing may suit both needs.

*A Route to Verbalization.* "In role-playing sessions we have had occasion to observe that the verbal performance of deprived children is markedly improved in the discussion period following the session. When talking about some action they have seen, deprived children are apparently able to verbalize much more fully. Typically, they do not verbalize well in response to words alone. They express themselves more readily when reacting to things they can see and do. Words as stimuli are not sufficient for them as a rule. Ask a juvenile delinquent who comes from a disadvantaged background what he doesn't like about school or the teacher and you will get an abbreviated, inarticulate reply. But have a group of these youngsters act out a school scene in which someone plays the teacher, and you will discover a stream of verbal consciousness that is almost impossible to shut off."<sup>17</sup>

Role-playing can have various beneficial results in the teaching of academic material in the school. Considerable excitement is added to a lecture when a point is illustrated by the instructor with role-playing. Most likely the incident will be long remembered by the audience. And if an inquiring student should wonder what Abraham Lincoln, for example, would think of our present civil rights policy, let Lincoln and Johnson stage a debate enacted by two students! The impossibilities of time and space are eliminated, and the civics lesson will be well-remembered.

"Role-playing can be utilized in countless ways (in school) such as acting out a history lesson (George Washington Signing the Constitution). Teaching arithmetic and economics by playing is a marvelous stimulus for discussion, and it appeals to the deprived child's love of action. It provides for a much more vivid presentation and fits in with his desire for excitement and movement . . . role-playing should be a trigger for advanced discussion and thinking. . ."<sup>18</sup>

### *The Use of "HIP" Language*

The following is a description of the use of "hip" language (combined with role playing) in teaching disadvantaged children in a special project in Syracuse, called the Madison Area Project.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Riessman, Frank. *The Culturally Deprived Child*. New York: Harper, 1963. p. 77.

<sup>18</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Riessman, Frank. pp. 32-33.

<sup>19</sup>*Syracuse Herald-Journal*, Monday, November 11, 1963.

## "STUDENTS DIG JIVE WHEN IT'S PLAYED COOL"

by

Robert Kanasola

I play it cool and dig all jive.  
That's the reason I stay alive.  
My motto, as I live and learn,  
Is: Dig and Be Dug in Return

This fine poem by Negro author Langston Hughes opened a new world of learning to a class of ninth graders at Madison Junior High. The poem was presented to the class by Gerald Weinstein, curriculum coordinator of the Madison Area Project.

A teacher had complained to Weinstein that her students "practically fell asleep" when she read a poem called "The Magic Carpet" from a standard school anthology.

Weinstein came to the rescue with Hughes' "Motto" and distributed copies to the class. This is his account of what happened.

After the students read the poem, there was a long moment of silence. Then came the exclamations.

"Hey, this is tough."

"Hey, Mr. Weinstein, this cat is pretty cool."

"It's written in our talk."

But when asked the meaning of "playing it cool," the students had difficulty verbalizing the idea.

A boy volunteered to act it out.

Weinstein took the part of a teacher and the boy pretended he was walking down the hallway.

"Hey, you," said the teacher, "you're on the wrong side of the hall. Get over where you belong."

Without looking up, the boy very calmly and slowly walked to the other side and continued without any indication of what was going on in his mind.

That was "playing it cool."

When Weinstein asked a boy to show what he would do when not playing it cool, a verbal battle ensued.

The class began offering definitions for "playing it cool:" calm and collected, no strain.

Weinstein suggested another, "nonchalant." A new word.

Next came a discussion of the phrase "dig all jive."

One student told how he once got into trouble because he didn't "dig the jive" of a group of streetcorner toughs.

So the message of Hughes' poem, the class discovered, was that he "stayed alive" because he "dug all jive" — understood all kinds of talk.



Hughes' motto was to "dig and be dug in return" — understand and be understood.

The students were amazed at their own analysis.

Weinstein asked the students how many kinds of jive they understood.

Why all kinds, of course.

The Madison Area Project official launched into an abstract essay on the nature of truth, using all the big words he could find.

The students looked blank.

He then asked them to test his understanding of their jive. They threw the colloquialisms at him and he got five out of six.

The class was impressed.

"According to Hughes, who has the better chance of staying alive," Weinstein asked, "You or I?"

You, they said, because you dig more than one kind of jive.

"The jive you have mastered is a beautiful one," Weinstein said.

"But you have to dig the school jive, too, the jive that will occur in other situations."

"That's what school is for, to help you dig all jive and stay alive."

The enthusiasm of that class session led the students into more of Hughes' poetry. Later they moved into other kinds of literature in more conventional language.

But the students were not the only ones to learn from that exciting class. Weinstein learned, too.

He learned the advantage of being familiar with the language of the children you are teaching and establishing a rapport with them.

For if a teacher doesn't "start where the child is," Weinstein says, he only reinforces the failure and frustration that has become the normal pattern for disadvantaged students.

Exposure to the best cultural works produces no magical result and even less effective is the "phony" literature that often characterizes school readers, especially in the lower grades.

Exposure must begin "where the child is" and proceed to other varieties of art forms.

The method applies to all kinds of students, Weinstein says. For the student who has read Shakespeare but has not read Langston Hughes, for example, is also disadvantaged."

It should be clear that we are *not* suggesting that teachers employ "hip" language in normal conversation with the underprivileged youngster; it is not intended as a device for attempting to be friendly with the child through imitating his culture. This would indeed be patronizing and dangerous. Rather the use of hip materials in a

formal lesson plan can become an excellent avenue to the style and interests of the disadvantaged and contribute to the development of their verbalization.

Recently in tutoring a disadvantaged high school student in English, I employed a hiptionary in a completely systematic and formal fashion. The first and rather immediate result was that the student learned a great many new English word definitions for the "hip" words with which she was long familiar:

*Hip Word<sup>20</sup> Definition*

"bug" to disturb, bother, annoy

'cop out" to avoid conflict by running away, not considered admirable or honorably accepted

"cool it" to be quiet, peaceful, tranquil

"far out" not comprehensible

"weak" inadequate, inappropriate

Words such as "tranquil," "inappropriate," etc. were not known by this youngster, but through use of the hip "word game" she quickly became familiar with them and derived great pleasure from a new found use of various "big" words.

I then used the hiptionary to clarify the meaning and significance of the metaphor (e.g. the "hip" phrases for bisexual are "Ac-Dc," "switch hitter," and "swings from both sides of the fence.")! Similarly many other linguistic concepts can be introduced through this "word game" utilizing "hip" language.

In addition to teaching technology there is great need for curriculum materials that appear to promise success with disadvantaged youngsters. Both the Bank Street College of Education, through its proposed Educational Resources Center, and Mobilization For Youth have been developing such curriculum laboratories. These laboratories should be closely related to the Teacher Institutes and should contain not only materials but also reports (and films)<sup>21</sup> of positive experiments in the teaching of the disadvantaged, functional illiterates, etc.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>The words in this list were taken from a hiptionary entitled "The Other Language" developed by Anthony Romeo at Mobilization For Youth, January, 1962.

<sup>21</sup>The Lincoln Filene Center of Tufts University and McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. are jointly preparing three films related to the teaching of disadvantaged children.

<sup>22</sup>An illustration would be the Bank St. experiment conducted in the summer of 1963 (to be repeated and extended in 1964) where disadvantaged youngsters showed marked academic and emotional improvement as a result of a special one month program. Shepard's project in the Bancker District of St. Louis is another illustration. Shepard's program is especially noteworthy because he has demonstrated that disadvantaged youngsters at the elementary and junior high school levels can be quickly improved to grade level. Much more comprehensive efforts than Shepard's might very well produce even more startling results. It is time to put an end to the tendency toward educational surrender on all but pre-school disadvantaged children.

## Effective Teacher Styles

There is some tendency to develop a hypothetical model of the ideal teacher. We tend to assume that effective teachers must be healthy and well-adjusted. I seriously question this idea. I am not suggesting, of course, that we look for sick people and make them teachers. What I am suggesting is that we think about the development of individual teacher-styles, and some of these may have significant non-healthy components. There appear to be many styles that function well with low income youngsters. Teachers succeed in different ways; there are many roads to Rome. In visits to schools in low income areas in over 35 cities, I have always found at least one teacher in a school who, it was agreed by everyone (children, parents, colleagues, and administrators), was an effective teacher. But the personality of each of these teachers, the manner of approach, and point of view was vastly different.<sup>23</sup>

For example, there is the compulsive type whom I find it difficult to query. This teacher is very fussy, teaches things over and over, is very concerned that I understand him, and treats me like a child. But actually in the classroom the behavior that annoys me can be quite effective. This kind of person might well be called a "sublimated compulsive." Of course, another kind of compulsive is a terrible teacher; the compulsive quality is not appropriately directed toward outer problems. But sublimated compulsives direct their compulsion into the functional order and structure which disadvantaged children like. These teachers are constantly concerned that the children understand, so they repeat and repeat and repeat. This is wonderful for the children, though not for me.

Another type of teacher is the "boomer." He shouts out in a loud strong voice: "You're going to learn. I'm here to teach you, and there is no nonsense in this classroom." He lays the ground-rules early, and the kids know immediately that there is a point beyond which they cannot go. They may not "like" him, but they learn. Some psychologists and educators might call this person "hostile"; yet he has learned to use this quality effectively in the classroom.

Another kind of teacher might be called the "maverick." Everybody loves him but the boss. He upsets everything because he's always raising "difficult" questions and presenting ideas that disturb. This teacher is convinced that ideas are meant to stir up, and consequently he develops a close link with his young and eager students. He is as surprised and curious as they at each turn of mind, each new discovery, and it is this fresh quality that comes through to them.

<sup>23</sup>The discussion of teacher types that follows is based on a joint unpublished paper with Arlene Hannah entitled *Teachers of the Poor*, 1964.

Then there is the "coach." He is informal, earthy, and may be an athlete, but in any case is physically expressive in conducting his dialogue with the world. Many low-income youngsters like this. Coming from homes characterized by activity and motion, they connect with this quality quickly and naturally.

In sharp contrast is the "quiet one." This teacher accomplishes much the same goal by sincerity, calmness and definitiveness. His essential dignity pervades the situation, and commands both respect and attention.

We also have the "entertainer," colorful, melodramatic, and most importantly, not afraid to have fun with the children. He may make mistakes through his sheer flair for the comic and is free enough to laugh with the children at his own blunders. His inventiveness may furrow his supervisor's brow, as when he has children make western hats from a paper reading assignment about cowboys. But they learn more about cowboys, and are much more interested in reading that paper now on their heads than if a traditional method had been applied. This teacher actively involves the children — their opinions count, and they know it.

A striking example of another teacher style is the "secular" type. This fellow is relaxed and informal with the kids, may have lunch with them, or use their bathroom. You would be amazed at how many children do not *really* believe that teachers eat and sleep and go to the bathroom like other people! This fellow is comfortable talking turkey with the kids, not in a mechanical or contrived way.

There are many other styles, but I will cite just one more: the secular intellectual. He is not academic, but is interested in knowledge and its transmission to youngsters. He is really interested in the substance of the material, not just because it is academically correct. He doesn't like classical music because he is supposed to, but because he likes all types of music; and it so happens, that he also likes blues music, jazz music, popular music. He really has *broad* horizons. One such person that I met, was especially interested in "hip" language and was learning it from the youngsters, a normally unwise action against which I would warn most people. But he was deeply interested in language and became genuinely interested in "hip" language. This involvement allowed him to use hip language without being false or condescending.

I am suggesting that teacher preparation should include learning about these types, with films and observation of them in action, but above all with chances to *role-play* the types. Each student should develop his repertoire by trying them out in permissive, unthreatening situations in his own group. He should play the classroom, the different



problems that arise, the discipline problem, the disorder problem. Out of this role play, he develops his own repertoire; no matter what is talked about in general, he must formulate these things in his own individual way, for his own specific personality. He needs more than practice teaching for this, since the actual classroom cannot allow full experimentation. He needs a practice situation of the role play type — experimental and permissive — to actually try out various techniques and approaches, to experiment with different styles, to see which ones fit, to blend them to his personality, and to develop his own strengths.

### Organization of the Teacher Institutes

Without detailing the methods whereby teachers would receive the training proposed in the five point plan, a number of general principles can be outlined:

1. Where possible teachers themselves (master teachers, consulting teachers) should do the teaching or group leading. It may be necessary first to hold "master" institutes where teachers, who would later train other teachers, would be exposed to the five point program. At a later point these master teachers would be supervised as they translated the program for their local schools. The master institute could call on all kinds of specialists, including sociologists, psychologists, Montessori specialists, role playing leaders, etc. The institutes could be introduced as special courses in pre-service training (in regular sessions or summer sessions) as well as for in-service programs.

2. Training that is provided close to the operations in which it will be utilized will be most effective.<sup>24</sup> Teachers, for example, should be worked with around their specific school and classroom problems and the "trainers" should visit the classrooms, observe the teachers closely and discuss problems and suggestions with them in considerable detail. The ideas embodied in the five point plan would thus be selectively applied in relation to on-the-job problems experienced by the teacher trainees. An interesting variant of this approach is to be found in the Bank Street College proposal for an Educational Resources Center.

"Teachers and their pupils selected for demonstration will actually move into the Center for a designated period—say, three weeks—where they will receive special instruction from master teachers and other specialists. When the class returns to its home school following the instruction period at the Center, the teacher will continue to use methods and skills acquired at the ERC and will also consult frequently with specialists from the Center who will visit the school.

<sup>24</sup>This proposal, called site training, as well as a number of other proposals in this section, were developed for the Rutgers University Training Center, a grant for which has been requested from the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency.

Eventually it is hoped that each school will boast a number of teachers who, with their classes, have had instructional periods at the Center." (*Bank Street Reporting*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1964.)

This Center will be devoted to "development, collection and dissemination of new instructional materials, new teaching methods, and curriculum innovations specifically designed to raise the achievement of the educationally-handicapped minority group child."

A group or team approach should be a central feature in the training, with a strong emphasis on building *esprit de corps* in the groups. The group experience would be examined itself and utilized for the development of concepts, understanding of group process, etc. ("T" (training) group approach).

Full participation of the trainees should be intensively solicited with regard to encouraging them to formulate their needs, how they see their problems, and their suggestions for meeting these problems. Hence, small teacher meetings should be organized to discuss (and role play) ways of meeting classroom difficulties, teaching techniques, and approaches. In this context, the trainers would offer for discussion techniques that have evolved elsewhere.

In order to have the training become a part of the "neuromuscular" make-up of the trainees, a *variety* of techniques should be instituted: supervisory conferences, role playing, films, demonstrations, quizzes, intensive brief reading, small group discussions, lectures, debates, and the writing of a paper. This methodology is based on two principles:

- A. People learn through a variety of styles — some learn best from doing (e.g., role playing), others from lectures, others from films, etc.

- B. In order to internalize material taught over a relatively short period of time, it is necessary to provide as much active practice and involvement as possible, along with corrective feedback from the supervisory staff; hence the emphasis on role playing and "supervisor's" sessions. In addition, having the learner teach the material to other trainees appears to be an excellent device for the development of deep learning.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have one final closing comment to make that may provide some backdrop for all that has been said. If you look at the field of education in the United States today, you see constant criticism of the school system, the curriculum, the teachers, the administration. The conformity of the system, the lack of real learning, etc., are constantly attacked. Paul Goodman, Edward Friedenberg and many others have

constant powerful criticism of the middle-class in our country. I call this the Erich Fromm motif. It has been more recently taken over by Paul Goodman. This is the penetrating, deep, critical evaluation of our society, and of middle-class people in particular, as conformists who have lost their spontaneity, their inner convictions. This criticism is very widespread. But there is one place where it barely arises, and this is when the teaching of disadvantaged children is discussed. The disadvantaged children apparently are to be made into these middle class people by the school culture; they are to be made to adapt to the oft-criticized school. Suddenly when we talk about these youngsters, we have a much more idealized picture of the school and the middle class life these youngsters are to be prepared for. Suddenly these children are to be made to adjust, to conform to our wonderful ways, forgetting how critical we have been. I agree with the David Riesmans, Paul Goodmans, and Erich Fromms and many of school critics that a great deal has to be done in changing the middle class and the school. Very seriously, I feel that these disadvantaged youngsters, with their culture and their style and their positives, can contribute an enormous amount toward helping us change the middle class, the school system and the society.<sup>25</sup>

### Summary

A five point program has been presented for informing teachers about the strengths of low income culture (attitudes toward education, cooperativeness, extended family, physical styles, etc.). The objective is to develop interest in and respect for low income culture, as distinct from appreciating the difficulties of the low income environment. The theory is that this will lead to an honest "expect more and get more" from the children and their parents.

It has been suggested that teachers not simply be *exposed* to low income life through home visiting and the like, but rather that they be carefully prepared in advance to understand what they see; and that as they visit the neighborhoods and homes there be continued discussion and interpretation of what they experience.

Various technologies that seem suited to low income children were discussed. Specific technologies were recommended related to the low income youngster's physical-visual style, games-orientation, down-to-earth informality, etc. Among the technologies suggested were:

#### 1. Organics

#### 2. Montessori techniques.

<sup>25</sup>See John Oliver Killens, "Explanation of the 'Black Psyche,'" *New York Times*, magazine section 6, June 7, 1964, pg. 37. For an excellent discussion of the Negro contributions to "our age."

nique for developing auditory set.

#### 4. Role playing.

#### 5. Use of "hip" language.

Various "successful" styles for teaching low income children have been presented (the "compulsive," the "maverick," the "coach," the "quiet one," the "secular intellectual," etc.). Teachers should have an opportunity to actually observe some of these styles, or see films of them in action, or have them role played. The aim is to suggest a range of possibilities from which the teachers could then develop their own repertoire.

Role Play techniques would be used to have teachers try out new approaches to classroom teaching and to develop their own individual styles and repertoire, fashioning the techniques to their own potential. It is through approaches such as these that the *art of teaching can be developed* and systematized.

Finally, it is suggested that teacher training will be most effective if it is led by other teachers and provided on the site where it will be used, directly in the schools where it will be applied.



## *A Search for an Educational Revolution*

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### *Breakthroughs and Breakdowns*

A revolutionary vision has emerged in American education. This vision is to educate the disadvantaged, for education today is central to security and status. The issue today is how to promote this vision into deep-seated change and effective practice. We need to move from an image of what we wish to its realization in practice.

Each year, for the last five years or so, a new major educational breakthrough is heralded. One year it is programmed instruction. Another year it is team teaching. This year it is obviously pre-kindergartens for "the culturally deprived." We hunger for one-shot, magic potions.

I vacillate between two reactions to these claims and efforts. On one hand, I feel that we know very little about how to do an effective job of educating the disadvantaged. On the other hand, I feel that if we implemented what we know we would be much further along the line. David Hunter's stress on implementation I think is essential. We really cannot talk about programs unless we have assurance that we have an educational structure and citizen and professional pressure to implement programs. We are not utilizing what we know, as Alvin Eurich has contended about the neglect of educational television. Demonstration and pilot projects often do not grow into modal practice, even when they prove out.

Despite the "breakthroughs," the vaunted "educational revolutions," I am disturbed about what is going on. I feel that we are not advancing very rapidly toward the goal of effective education for low-income groups in the United States.

Recently, I wrote an article for an English periodical on current programs for school dropouts in the United States. It was not until after I had finished the article that I realized I had misinterpreted the request from the editor. He had asked for a piece to fit into an issue on breakthroughs in the United States. Somehow, I misinterpreted the request and wrote of breakdowns in the United States, for my sorrowful feeling is that a good deal of what is taking place in educational circles really is a breakdown. A friend of mine who is very active in this field wrote me a letter to say that he detected a note of pessimism in this article, citing six or seven paragraphs. My reply was, "Man, that was no note, that was a chorus." My impression is that we are making a lot of sound and fury, but that the actual net produce is of very limited value so far. Despite all the hoopla about higher horizons, educational saturations, change agents, we are not really achieving much. The breakthroughs rapidly break down. True, there is considerable change in some schools and some of the disadvantaged have been benefited, but the change is not very great nor does it tend to be continuing.

Unfortunately, the failure to achieve great educational advance in the face of the new vision of the mission of the schools is leading to scapegoating of low-income children. Frequently, the struggle to aid children who do not easily fit into the school situation is given up. I think, for example, that the title of this series is misleading. I do not find the concept of "cultural deprivation" a useful one. I think it leads people into confusing ways of beginning to analyze the problem. True, people are different, — but the *obligation* of the school system is to learn how to deal with people who are quite different in their ways of learning.

The emphasis should not be upon a standard to which people measure up and then we will deal with them, but rather that we learn how to deal effectively with people who are quite different in outlooks, experiences and capacities.

The obligation is not in the people who are different, but rather in the professional who must learn to deal with a wide variety of students. If a physician's patient is not responding to penicillin, he moves to sulpha or to another form of treatment. The medical model is that the obligation is the physician's to do something about the problem. This obligation attaches to all professionals, who have to avoid the stance that problems rest fundamentally with clientele. *Patients or clientele do not fail; only practitioners do.* The use of a term like

"cultural deprivation" leads us away from looking at ourselves as practitioners. We begin to scapegoat those with whom we are having difficulty.

I fear that we are beginning to move toward the possibility of a do-nothing policy in regard to making sweeping changes in the school. For example, the present emphasis upon pre-kindergarten education as basically necessary for the advance of low-income kids is terribly exaggerated. Obviously, there is an important role for it, but we should not act as though it were a panacea that obviates other changes.<sup>1</sup> Martin Mayer has stated the issue with his usual eloquence: "The argument for greatly enriched pre-school experience is certainly strong enough without an insistence on eternal damnation for those not lucky enough to enjoy it." Increasingly, the notion is being spread that if kids cannot make school by grade one or by grade three, they can have no educational future. The school does not really have to bother to try to do something in the later years, because the essential emphasis is upon the child's ability to succeed early. Further, he has to have a particular kind of personal experience in order to learn.

I do not think that this view is valid. This ideology bars schools from moving in more flexible, adaptive directions. The escape from failure, the fear of defeat, is leading to a search for gimmicks, for movement without change. We are trying to avoid upsetting the old ways, as we paste on some new ways. At its worst, we are subjected to a series of public relations maneuvers masquerading as educational programs. I sometimes think that no one believes in the power of the printed word as much as some patrons of the public relations office. In their minds, if you write that something is occurring, it is actually taking place. In my most bitter moments, I conclude that there is nothing as aged as yesterday's educational publicity release, nor as fraudulent as tomorrow's. We need less public relations announcements and more internal reorganization of the schools.

We are basically looking for a technology to solve our problems with the disadvantaged. Technological changes in the way of pre-kindergarten programs, team teaching or reading machines and the like will be an important part of any educational revolution. But I doubt very much that they will be the most important part of the revolution *today*. And I emphasize *today*: Different times, different problems, different procedures. Today, something else is needed in addition to new technologies. Just as we may have false gods, so may we have false revolutions.

<sup>1</sup> I am not discussing Martin Deutsch's useful programs, but the way in which an ideology is being built around a useful idea. See Alvin W. Gouldner's discussion of this process in "The Meta-physical Pathos of Bureaucracy," *American Political Science Review*, 1953.



Though I think many issues spur an educational revolution, I shall be emphasizing the neglected role of administration: The need for adaptability and flexibility and for an effective school climate.

### *The Nature of the Educational Revolution*

When I was a graduate student in economics, I read a book, *The Fall of Rome*, by Vladimir Simkhovitch, an economic historian at Columbia, that strongly influenced me. Everybody knows why Rome fell — the Goths came down from the North and took over the city. Many explanations stress the external forces that subjugated the mighty Roman Empire. Simkhovitch had another approach: Rome fell because of the declining marginal productivity of the land. Rome was no longer able to support itself agriculturally; this weakened the population. The tensions which existed within Rome emerged out of the economic plights. The important element in the failure of Rome was not the coming of the Goths, but the internal stress and strain, — that was the core to be analyzed in the demise of Rome's imperial grandeur. The questions were: What was happening within Rome to weaken it? What were the kinds of tensions, the schisms, that were taking place, making it possible for an outside group to be victorious?

I think this mode of analysis is appropriate to education. What are the problems *within* educational institutions today? We have to look increasingly toward the internal structure and operation of education. This is particularly important now, for many of the new technologies and new programs require a new kind of administrative structure which permit and facilitate these programs.

It is my belief — and I am sure that everyone who has had close contact with schools has a similar feeling — that the administration of a school impregnates every nook and cranny of the school. Frequently, after a half hour stay in a school, one can describe what the chief administrator is like without ever meeting him. You can walk along the halls, look into the classrooms, and you really know the institution. It has an atmosphere and climate, a way of operating, which affects every thing that takes place.

Many programs of innovation succeed because they really are changes in school administration, and sometimes school administrators, rather than because of the specific content of the program. For example, I suspect that a core element of the positive phase of progressive education was that its supporters devotedly provided an effective climate for the teachers and found school administrators who made it possible for teachers to be flexible and imaginative. To some extent, at its beginning, progressive education was a revolution in educational administration, permitting teachers to be experimental and adaptive. In the

absence of an appropriate organizational base, innovational programs fail.

In the summer of 1963, President Kennedy provided funds for the U. S. Office of Education to encourage school dropouts to return to school. In the month of August, counselors went out into some communities to talk to dropouts; and a sizeable number of youth did return to school. From what one can learn, many, if not most, of those who returned to school dropped out shortly afterwards. This gang-ho campaign did not accompany any change in schools. Dropouts went back to the same kind of situation they were in before. They were returning exiles. Shortly, they again became expellees and refugees from the school, the displaced persons of the affluent society.

Many innovations require an atmosphere, an organization, a structure, which permits them to take root. For example, many schools in low-income areas are now emphasizing school-community relations, getting parents more involved in the educational outlook of their children and closer to their schools. In one school, this increased contact has backfired. The low-income parents are more alienated from the school than ever before. Through greater intimacy with the school, they have learned how the school operates and how their children are treated by teachers and administrators. And they do not like what they think are the punitive behaviors of school personnel. Increased parent contact with the schools, if it is to be effective may be more important in changing the attitude and behavior of school personnel than those of parents!

Yes, new technology and procedures are needed, but they will tend to have limited effects without organizational change. New technologies will rapidly become arid, unless there is organizational change. Fortunately, the new technology can be a leverage for organizational change. For example, pre-kindergarten programs may lead to widespread modifications. Once we strive to improve the pre-school years, we have to plan to make it possible for the later school years to build upon the gains of the early school experience. A successful pre-school program demands changes in the second grade or the fifth grade.

### *Administrative Imperatives*

Let me turn now to the ingredients of this revolution in educational administration:

First, I think we need today an authentic commitment to low-income youth. The commitment has to be clear, honest, dedicated, and implemented. Increasingly, it will have to include a commitment to school integration. As David Hunter has pointed out, it has to include money for schools, especially those in low-income areas. Thus, a commitment

toward low-income youth includes a commitment toward integration and a commitment for funds. These are basic. Against these fundamentals, I want to make more specific comments about school outlook, organization and climate.

First, the schools have to adapt to the variations in the students. There is no one method which works with everybody. Variability and flexibility of programs and approaches are central.

Secondly, school has to provide satisfactions to students. If school operates as or is perceived as a prisoner-of-war camp, then I think Edgar Friedenberg and Paul Goodman are correct in their defense of the dropout. The only honorable course for a prisoner of war is to break out of the camp. School climate and effective school programs are obviously crucial here in building satisfactions in the school.

Third, more effective teachers are needed. We have routinized and over-organized schools, making it very difficult for teachers to be effective. I sometimes think that our basic perspective in administering school is that we believe the task is to make it possible for morons to teach idiots. This view can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. The teachers' role has been overly circumscribed and overly determined from on top. Standardization, routinization and accountability have been positive steps in the development of schools, as they have been in industrial practice. But I think the present situation calls increasingly for flexibility and individualization within the school. This is a general problem of large-scale organization.

### *Flexibility and Adaptability*

What is involved in moving towards more organizational flexibility and adaptability?

#### *Assumption A:*

*Education today is not a continuous process but a discontinuous one.* I think this is increasingly going to be true. People will be dropping out of public schools and returning; college students will drop out and return — this is already exceedingly common. With changing occupational demands, people are going to have to be retrained — "redeveloped," in a sense — at different points of their lives. Education and training are not one-time, one-shot activities. Leaving and returning to education and training at different points of one's life will be the modal practice. The principle which I think is involved here is that we need many entry and re-entry points to the school system and training. This is especially true of those who have difficulty in making the educational grade. We need programs which fit the unique development and experience of individuals at the time they re-enter school. The tenth grader who has dropped out and worked for a couple of

years and returned to school, differs from the tenth grader who never did. We need new bridges and linkages between school and the outside. It is not enough to open a few re-entry doors; the returning student has to be provided an experience which is individually useful.

#### *Assumption B:*

*People vary.* There is tremendous difference among youth today, whatever the social class level. In any given socio-economic level, there are many different kinds of youths. Upper middle class progeny are both beatniks and Goldwaterites. Some school dropouts are able to get decent jobs, while others are candidates for permanent economic dependence. Variations in experience and outlook mean that different people need different things at various points in their lives. *No one method works equally effectively with everybody.* I think this is our experience with teaching reading. Adherents of some educational practices are members of religious cults, vying in protestations about which cult has the revealed truth. I think the unfortunate truth is that everyone has the revealed truth, but only a small part of it. From what I have been able to learn, it appears that certain methods work very well with certain groups, but they do not work very effectively with others.

*We cannot be bound to method.* To some extent, arguments about methods are controversies about different ends. Obviously, different ends may require different means. The more frequent situation is that we do not recognize that there may be many different routes to the same end. We have become bound up in the means. The teaching of reading, for example, should be based on a set of empirically based generalizations. What procedures work with whom? If a procedure does not work with some — then we have to learn ways that are more effective with them.

One of the central issues in achieving effective differentiation is how to avoid stigma. The less "normal," less "typical" tracks tend to become stigmatized. In turn, stigma leads to degradation and low-quality education. Those recruited to do the low-prestige teaching jobs tend to be of lower quality; they frequently do not have much esteem for what they are doing. Many youths who are receiving special attention in school or out are stigmatized because of this attention. Consequently, the help they receive from the new programs is very slight indeed.

The need in our society is for differentiation without stigma. Historically, though, perceived differences are attached to a scale of values, and honor and stigma are parcelled out accordingly. We need differentiation in society — I certainly would not want everyone to be like me — but the criteria of the present distribution of honor-stigma are



certainly questionable. Perhaps, too, the intensity of feeling about honor or stigma might well be reduced.

These are large issues. For the school administrator, their immediate mandate is to treat as a major task the achievement of individualization and differentiation without producing stigma.

#### *Assumption G:*

*Good teachers emerge when they have enough independence and scope to permit personal style to flourish.* There is no one best type of teacher, nor one all-purpose teaching approach. Teachers have to be permitted more independence, more scope, and more initiative. A perplexing difficulty here is how to build teachers' accountability for performance at the same time that individual teacher variations are encouraged. In order to attain teacher accountability, school systems have determined what the teacher puts into the system: the boundaries of the syllabus, the class plan, and so on. The end product, the output in terms of students' achievements, is often given less attention than the inputs. If outputs are emphasized as the mark of success, then teachers can have wider latitude and still be held accountable for their behavior. When, for example, class plans are stressed, then inputs are central and individual initiative curbed. New administrative outlooks are necessary.

#### *Assumption D:*

*No permanent solutions exist.* We have had too much of the feeling that if we followed a particular policy or procedure, our problems would be solved for all time. Different times, different places, different issues, require different policies. Change and adaptability, assessment and appropriateness, are the continuing imperatives. No one-time change will safeguard us forevermore. We constantly have to adapt to new circumstances. As our political climate changes, as our economy moves in new directions, as education becomes the prime route to social mobility in America, as we develop a new poor, we have new demands upon education. Educational systems have to move. All organizations, including educational systems, have to adapt or become anachronistic. There is no necessarily enduring value in any particular strategy or procedure.

The orientation to change runs the danger of falling into novelty and faddism for change's sake. The question is can we become adaptive and flexible without becoming faddists and novelty hunters, thrill-seekers of the new?

### *Organizational Climate*

The climate of the school is of great importance. It affects — as well as is a product of — the behavior of the students and teachers. In con-

sequence, it is paramountly the administrators' responsibility to improve it.

In analyzing the important ingredients of a "positive" school climate, we are caught up in personal biases since our values determine our definition of what is positive. We need a pluralism in our quest of desirable ends. What is the best way depends upon particular circumstances. What is positive in some group or situation may not be positive for others. Nor do we know enough to be definitive about what builds the different types of effective climates. It is important to recognize that there are many different kinds of positive school climates and that there may be diverse roads to each.

It seems to me one of the basic ingredients in a positive school climate is *respect*. Students have to be respected. Teachers have to be respected, particularly by school administrators who frequently implicitly denigrate their staff by such devices as time clocks.

My impression of many programs aimed at low-income youth is that the school personnel not only have meager understanding of these youths, but that they really do not like them. I doubt that you can go very far with a youth whom you do not like. Thus, the attitude of the school towards disadvantaged youth — who are disturbing to the more affluent in part because they are disadvantaged — is essential to effective programs.

Learning and knowledge have to be respected, which is not always true in our schools. We are sometimes more respectful of particular teaching methods than we are of knowledge itself. There are many different kinds of positive school climates, many different ways of achieving this condition. Respect has many different doors.

A second important theme of a positive school climate is authenticity. The faculty and administration have to stand on what they say. Edgar Z. Friedenberg in his *The Vanishing Adolescent* and elsewhere has been trying to show us the inauthenticity in the relationship between schools, school personnel and students. Frequently, school administrators are phonies. Youth recognize that they do not say what they mean. Little is going to work as long as inauthentic relationships prevail. If a school system changes, it has to believe in what they are doing. The changes cannot be for public relations effectiveness alone. There has to be a real commitment, and this includes an authentic commitment to integration.

The third theme of a positive school climate is the fostering of *competence*. The school has to be able to do the job it sets out to do. Youth generally, and low-income youth particularly, do not respect authority figures who are incompetent, who make promises which they

cannot achieve, who have goals which have little relationship to the outside world. The school situation has to be built on competence.

The fourth need is for *consistency* and *predictability* in a school. I think many schools do not have predictability. The prison experience is interesting. Prison riots occur when the practiced, predictable rules, the formal and informal procedures, are broken by the warden. In most prisons, the inmates have taken over a good deal of the functioning of the prison. This is known by the warden and it is permitted. It is an easier way to run a prison. In fact, it is difficult to run it any other way. When the warden is forced to change procedures because of a break or the insistence of the board of overseers, he begins to get tough, to put the screws on, to break up the informal groups; the informal loci of power are prevented from operating as they did before. Then a food riot or strike may occur. The predictable modes of behavior have been supplanted and prevented from operating in their usual way.

I do not want to liken schools to prisons, although highly controlled institutions have many similar characteristics. This is reflected in Rene Clair's great movie, *A Nous La Liberte*, the predecessor of Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, which has a fascinating sequence where the camera moves between a factory's mass production line and a prison, showing the similarity between the pace and control of the prison and the pace and control of the production line.

Predictability and consistency are essential to any positive school climate. I have observed that consistency is perhaps the most important element in the personality or outlook of those who are effective with low-income youth. A wide diversity of personality types — not just the heavy athlete or the "one of the boys" types — can do well. I think of a dandified, pedantic, little Frenchman whom few would predict could be effective with tough New York City boys. Yet he was — he showed respect for them even when he forced them to take off their hats; his behavior was always predictable and consistent.

Fifth, the school has to have *purpose* and *direction*. It has to believe in something. It has to have a mission. A school is unlikely to have a positive climate without a mission. If the theme is just that everyone love everyone else and there is no tie beyond that, the love won't last very long. A good deal of the positive impact of programs aimed at low-income youth depends on the Hawthorne effect on school personnel. They believe in what they are doing; they are consulted and involved in the new programs. Morale is high in the pursuit of a common goal.

Finally, I think school programs have to be relevant to low-income youth. They have to see that what the school is doing has some relationship to their own lives.

Important developments are occurring in the United States. We are learning important things. But we are not sufficiently implementing them. We are moving toward a more positive school situation for center-city youth, despite hesitations and obstacles. The greatest lag is in the area of internal school organization.

### Implementation

New technology may produce revolutionary changes. When technology has wide impact, it is usually because changes occur in the relationships among those who are involved through the technology. I think this is the crucial point to see. What are the needed new changes in the relationships between the administrators, the teachers and the students? New technology is necessary to work more adequately with low-income youth, but this technology will be inadequate unless facilitating administrative change occurs.

How is the kind of educational revolution that we need going to be produced? Pressure from within the educational establishment and from without are both necessary. I think that we are getting more of the externally important pressure that we need than we are of the internal drive for change. The Negro Revolution and the beginning war on poverty, are focusing attention on schools, asking how well they are doing the job of educating low-income students. Many recent changes have resulted from these pressure thrusts. I expect them to continue.

The recent availability of funds for education of the "culturally deprived" is leading many who have had no interest in disadvantaged youth to begin to manifest a concern so that they can drink at the new financial trough. With the smell of poverty money, many will be running to the youth they have long neglected. My initial response to this phenomenon, I must confess, is a moralistic one: Repugnance at the new-found "mission" that money can now buy, but that social responsibility did not. But my more reflective friends have convinced me that if you want change, you have to give people a reward, a material interest, in moving in new directions; altruism cannot be depended on. Poverty money is providing school systems, schools of education and affluent professors, with a stake in doing new things about the poor. Sometimes, the interest in low-income youth comes out of unloving things like developing good public relations, or obtaining money to do other things under the guise of helping the poor, or striving to reduce politically important pressures. But the most important result is that more attention is being given to low-income youth. Nevertheless, these activities have to be policed — held accountable — to see that they



actually benefit those to whom we dedicate ourselves in the preambles to our projects.

External pressure is thus leading to increased attention to low-income youth, though not without difficulties. But have teachers done all they could to bring about change? Teacher organizations — both the unions and the professional organizations — have paid inadequate attention to the reorganization and rededication of schools so that they can deal more effectively with low-income pupils. It is important that teachers and their organizations take the responsibility of initiating and demanding action for the improvement of schools, especially those in low-income areas.

Until broader changes are made, teachers' initiative in securing modifications in the schools are of grave importance. One of the frequent complaints of fledgling teachers is that they cannot implement their good ideas because the school authorities resist them. Schools of education are caught in the bind of preparing students for what is desirable practice, which may lead to strain in the actual teaching situation, or to reduce their goals to what is acceptable practice to many school officials. This is a widespread problem in American life, having many different faces.

I am beginning to believe that the encrustations of professionalization and the rigidities of bureaucratic organizations require each of us, as professionals, to be in tension with the organizations in which we work. We have to subvert as well as live with our bureaucracies. Every large organization has a bureaucratic underground, a group resistant to the existing practices of the organization. Much of what we learn about American foreign policy is leaked out by dissident groups within the State Department. Some of us will have to be provocative, raising questions and following policies which are not fully acceptable to the organizations in which we work if we are to fulfill our responsibilities to our students and to our society. We need courageous, creative discontent.

Increasingly, as we live in bureaucracies, we shall have to face the Eichmann question: What is our individual responsibility for what our organization does? To what extent does organizational loyalty supersede personal morality and require us to ignore or protect incompetence and irresponsibility? Should not teachers, singly and in association, publicly and privately, criticize what their schools are doing when the youth are victimized?

Obviously, such pressure is insufficient to swing the battle to the improvement of conditions for low-income youth. But it is one of the things that can be done.

I have stressed that respect for students and competence are important elements in successful teaching of low-income youth. Does this imply that teachers have to have "mature" personalities or exceptional intellect; that we can only succeed if we have more restricted criteria of admission to teaching, thereby aggravating the teacher shortage? No one, of course, can argue against the desirability of getting more feeling teachers into the system; this may happen as salaries and the status of the profession increase. But this is unlikely in the short-run. Nor will we be getting the intellectual giants who made lycées and gymnasiums the superior schools they have been; the special factors leading learned persons into lower levels of education do not exist in our society. What are our possibilities of getting better teachers in the immediate situation?

Few of us can consistently rise above our surroundings. In a fascinating study of physicians, it has been shown that those with the best training — attendance at elite medical schools — do not do well in poor medical settings. More important than the training of a physician is whether or not he is in a hospital situation which permits and pushes him into the high-level practice of medicine. Similarly, for teachers, the community and organizational setting of a school affect whether or not teachers can have authentic relationships with their students. If a community does not have commitment to low-income youth, few authentic responses can occur. Authenticity occurs not only because of personality and value characteristics of the teachers, but from the situation as well. Some people can triumph over adverse conditions and demonstrate devotion and respect. But for most of us, if the situation indicts authenticity or does not encourage it, then authenticity will be a rarity.

Nonetheless, I think that we can do more than we have to promote teachers' positive feelings about low-income youth. The emphasis, I have asserted, is that teacher training should lead to the development of each individual's style rather than to the emulation of one grand style of teaching. People have different ways of developing and of expressing their style. Many teachers have to become more aware of how they can more effectively use themselves in the teaching situation. I do not mean that they need psychotherapy, but that they lack adequate mirrors in their training so that they can learn their strengths and weaknesses. They are not aided in discovering useful leads to develop teaching approaches with which they are creative. I think much of this can be learned. And I think that, as Frank Riessman has contended, we can give teachers and prospective teachers experiences and knowledge about low-income youth that will build positive feelings and respect.

Schools of education shall have to change. There is much to criticize here, but I think, too, that there has been terrible scapegoating. I have endured department meetings in the social sciences where almost every time some inkling of criticism of the department appeared, within ten minutes an indictment of the school of education would emerge as the central theme of what had started as self-examination. The education school was causing the problem, no matter what it was.

We have to shed the strait-jacket of thought about the process of preparing teachers and the over-emphasis on formal credentials, a mark of our uncertainty about what is effective performance. Research has to be conducted in a serious way. Reading studies of school drop-outs fills me with oceanic despair; many are criminally incompetent.

The cookbook approach to pedagogy, research and administration prevents teachers and administrators from learning how to think imaginatively about their problems. Underlying much of the teaching in schools of education is an absence of respect for the students and their potential. Lacking, frequently, is a sense of vitality and enthusiasm about teaching itself.

Schools of education — like medical schools — have a tremendous impact on practice. A mission to work with the disadvantaged is needed — and a willingness to forego comforting clichés, to face the anxiety and adventure of discovering how to deal effectively with low-income youth and to build school institutions which attract rather than repel.

### **Conclusion**

If we agree "That loyalty to petrified opinions never yet broke a chain nor freed a human soul," then we must beware of the persistent danger of traveling on old roads and triumphing on old fields, lacking the courage to take off from where we are. We hope for great breakthroughs in pedagogy. Perhaps they will soon come; probably not. In either case, the educational revolution largely depends on the outlook and behavior of the educational establishment.